

THE SCOURGE.

MAY 1, 1811.

THE POLITICAL OBSERVER. No. II.

MASSENA'S RETREAT.

THAT we are still of some consequence in the rank of nations, that we are still capable of supporting our friends and punishing our enemies, are truths which the expedition to Walcheren had almost obliterated from the remembrance of the continent. Distinguished during the last two years for the disproportion of our resources to our power; despised as a nation possessing great powers without the wisdom to apply them to any real advantage; lavish of our treasures in enterprizes that were planned without judgment and executed without skill; an issue like that which has closed the campaign in Portugal, was necessary to raise us from the contempt and distrust which had so long attached to the English name. Since the peace of 1763, no occurrence has taken place so momentously favourable to the people of England as the retreat of Massena: our victories in Egypt were on a spot too far removed from the view of European nations, and too remotely connected with their interests to excite many emotions of curiosity, or to impress them with any immediate and striking conviction of the superiority of the English character, and of the illimitable resources of its power. But on the fate of Portugal the attention of Europe has been long and anxiously directed: its deliverance was of the highest interest to every nation of the continent; the theatre of warfare was near and conspi-

cuous, the generals opposed to Lord Wellington were of the first military fame, the soldiers whom they commanded had been long inured to almost inevitable victory, the supplies demanded on both sides were of a nature and a magnitude calculated to exemplify in the most forcible manner the nature and extent of the military resources of both empires, and, what was above all things the most important, an opportunity was afforded the surrounding nations of comparing the character of the English as allies with that of the French invaders, who, under the pretext of protection, violated their wives and plundered their possessions.

If any thing could add to the pleasure which these reflections are calculated to excite, it would be the consideration that nothing has been sacrificed by Lord Wellington to the acquisition of momentary glory, and that he has never suffered himself to be diverted from the great object in which he has succeeded, by the temptation of success in a glorious but unprofitable conflict. It has been too frequently considered as the characteristic of the English soldiery, that they are dangerously impatient of protracted warfare, that in quick and desperate attack they are sure of victory, but that in a campaign of which the event depends not on the result of a succession of hazardous enterprizes, but on the comparative ability of each party to sustain the inconveniences, and support the discouragements of watchful inactivity, they were not to be trusted. But the campaign in Portugal has shewn that they are neither impatient of restraint, nor less subordinate to the discipline of the camp than equal to the more vigorous exertions of military prowess. They have not suffered the privations of the French, but the ability of the latter to sustain all that human strength and fortitude can endure, was established by the campaign of Bonaparte in Poland. To a situation equally difficult and distressing the English troops have never been reduced; but if they have displayed so much of passive bravery on the present occasion, we may confidently presume that

they would not be found unequal, even in large bodies, to inaction more prolonged and trials more severe.

By those who sacrifice every nobler feeling to the spirit of faction, it has been asserted that Lord Wellington has great reason to thank *fortune* for his success. If it is to fortune that his lordship has been indebted for the accomplishment of a plan adopted more than fourteen months ago; if fortune deprived the French army of provisions, and fortified the lines of our position; the conquests of Alexander and the victories of Marlborough were the mere result of chance, the dominion of Asia was obtained by accident, and the power of Louis the fourteenth was humbled to the dust, not because the generals of the allies were skilful, their soldiers brave, and their treasures inexhaustible, but because the Gallic despot was unlucky. The history of Lord Wellington's progress from the first formation of his lines in front of Lisbon, to the retreat of Massena has been characterized by all that distinguishes the great commander from the fool of fortune. For many months he has persevered in a system of defence which would subject the enemy to the alternative of attacking him under every possible disadvantage, or of evacuating the country with the most hazardous precipitation: to the accomplishment of his plan he sacrificed every impulse of impatience, every motive of irregular ambition—" *he fought no vain battles,*" (Ed. Rev.) but, steady to his first great purpose, displayed the united qualities of a Flaminus and a Fabius, and while he overawed the enemy by the intrepidity of his movements, he confounded their devices by the cautious vigilance of his defensive attitudes.

Many years have elapsed since Buonaparte has been successfully resisted on the continent of Europe; the greatest military powers have never been able to boast of more than a momentary and casual triumph over their French invaders, and the perpetual succession of their victories has given to his troops a character of invincibility. It is surely a rational source of triumph to the British na-

tion that they alone have been able to exhibit a spectacle so extraordinary as that of his bravest armies and his ablest generals, acknowledging our military superiority by a shameful flight before troops whom they had dared to revile in every form of expression that a language fertile in contemptuous epithets could supply; that a nation of twelve millions, whose principal energies have been directed to the establishment of their naval power, cut off by nature from many of the advantages of military tuition, should have done more to humble the pride of France than all the military powers of the continent separate or united. Can any one doubt after reading the dispatches, that if the battles of Wagram and Eylau had been fought between the French under Buonaparte, and the British under a general like Lord Wellington, they would have terminated in a manner fatal to the continuance of French dominion over the other empires whom she has subjected to her rod? The battle of Barrosa has evinced the superiority of our troops in desperate conflict, and the campaign in Portugal, the ability of our officers to contend with the ablest generals of the greatest military power in the universe. While this is the case, we have no reason to despond: let our country be ravaged, and let us have only one foot of land on which to contend for our existence or our liberty, and that spot shall be the scene of another contest between tyranny and freedom, not less glorious in its result than that which immortalized the plain of Marathon.

The lessons to be derived by our ministers from this campaign are of the highest practical importance. Had a Burrard or a Whitelocke been appointed on this occasion to the chief command, how different would have been the fate of our army, the feelings of respiring Europe, and the situation of the ministers themselves? The sacrifice of a country's glory to the private partialities of a sovereign, or to the supposed interest of men in office, will only alienate from the monarch the affections of his people, and eventually destroy those foundations on which

alone even the most selfish statesman must depend. We will venture to assert that by the selection of General Graham to command the troops who achieved the victory of Barrosa, the ministers did not lose a single vote in parliament, while they exalted the glory of their country, and secured to themselves the gratitude of the people. We hope that another Chatham will never be sent out to command an expedition that has been planned by another Castlereagh; but the wise choice of instruments will atone for many faults and deficiencies in the executive power. A great commander will render even an unadvisable or desperate enterprize glorious to himself and serviceable to his country; but the wisest measures of the ablest statesman may be rendered abortive, or productive only of injury and disgrace by the stupidity or cowardice of an unworthy general.

That Lord Wellington can advance into the heart of Spain is nearly impossible. The armies by which he is opposed are numerous, and the positions on which they retreat favourable to defensive operations. But Portugal is saved! Her frontier when defended by the means Lord Wellington now possesses, is impregnable; and if the country was before so exhausted as to render subsistence impossible to the French army, it is evident that the experiment, supposing his lordship to retreat, cannot be repeated. We should presume that it is Bonaparte's design to confine the operation of his armies to Spain. He probably calculates that it will be possible with the forces now there, at once to defend its frontier and to keep its people in subjection. But the great effect of Massena's retreat will be to inspire the Spaniards with renewed confidence in their allies, to shew them that a determined spirit of resistance is likely to be rewarded with ultimate success, and that, though we are victors, *we do not conquer for ourselves.*

It is the natural consequence of the protraction of the war in the peninsula, that our allies become every day better able to render assistance to themselves: if they have

been often defeated, and sometimes shamefully betrayed, how great must be that energy, and how determined that spirit which can brave the repetition of misfortunes so severe, and persevere in the contest under circumstances apparently so disadvantageous? If, when the British troops were only exhibited to their eyes as retreating before the forces of Buonaparte, or when their own cause was rendered almost hopeless by the advance of their enemies in Portugal, they could still defy the power of the tyrant, how much will their ardor in the cause of themselves and of Europe be increased, how much their means of resistance be augmented, by the approach of the British army in the full career of victory, by the spectacle of a neighbouring and a rival country relieved from the tyranny of an atrocious banditti, and by the contemplation of a general who conquers only to deliver, and of a soldiery who are brave without ferocity and desperate without wickedness.

It is an unfortunate characteristic of the present times, that all our politicians, whether statesmen or quid nuncs, are thick-and-thin men; that every thing done by their own party must be right, and every thing done by their opponents must be wrong. They forget that the political conduct of every man is alternately open to censure or to praise; that to every general principle there may be exceptions; that a bad measure may be suggested by a man of talents and experience, and a good one by an idiot and a vagabond; that it is possible to be a Foxite, and yet occasionally approve of the conduct of Mr. Percival; a Burdettite, and yet an opposer of unlimited reform. We think the Duke of York guilty of the charges against him, though we think Mr. Wardle equally contemptible in talents and despicable in character; we think that Mr. Finnerty deserved the punishment inflicted upon him, though we detest Lord Castlereagh, and think the conduct of the attorney-general in the highest degree arbitrary and indecorous. This only is independence: to that virtue no man can lay any substantial claim, who adopts every

opinion that is pleasing to the ministry, or believes every measure to be wrong that is censured by the opposition. A conscientious man cannot read a newspaper for three weeks without seeing that on many occasions all parties have been alternately right and wrong: that the country has been benefited by an apostate and a swindler, or injured by a placeman of upright morals and transcendent talents. To judge of circumstances as they rise, is the great duty of him who would instruct his fellow-creatures: the accommodation of facts to preconceived opinions is equally deserving of reprobation, whether it be detected in the columns of the *Post* or the *Examiner*.

Though we think therefore that on many occasions the Pittite party have proved themselves unworthy of their great original, and still remember how much the country has suffered from their former presumption or incaution; we are of opinion that in the whole management of the war in Portugal they deserve the gratitude of their country. As they have been made responsible for failure and disgrace, it is but fair that they should share the glory of the triumph that has rewarded and accompanied our generals and our soldiers; and we certainly hope that if we have only been successful because we have been fortunate, our ministers may always be so *lucky* as to choose such *lucky* commanders as Lord Wellington.

GENTLEMEN LETTER WRITERS.

MR. EDITOR,

THE public has for many years past been entertained and edified by the lucubrations of periodical letter writers; of men who indite epistles under the signature of Cræsus from the Fleet, and assume the name of Demosthenes to dignify philippics that have been composed behind the desk of an attorney. For some time the only qualities by which we expected these productions, by whatever party they might be sanctioned, to be distinguished, were false-

hood and scurrility. Of late, however, the tone of democratic sturdiness has been observed only in one or two periodical journals; a popular letter writer must now be as learned as Varro, and as elegant as Chesterfield. The *fortiter in re* is sacrificed to the *suaviter in modo*: it is not so much required that what is asserted should be just and reasonable, as that it should be expressed according to the most approved models of epistolary composition.

To say much, and express nothing, is an art which few individuals possess in a supereminent degree. For him, therefore, who excels in this admirable faculty, let the highest honors of literature be reserved. The difficulty of an attainment enhances the merits of its successful pursuer; and whether the following letter from the bureau of the gentleman whose poetical budget I opened last month for the entertainment of your readers, be regarded as a model of excellence in this department of literature, or as furnishing a few hints to more elaborate performers in the same line, it is equally deserving of your favourable notice.

To the Master of the Crown and Anchor in the Strand.

SIR,

The great duty of every one entrusted with the happiness of others, is to promote their felicity with all the powers of his mind, and all the energy of his corporeal faculties. But if this proposition be generally true when applied to individuals who move only in the usual circle of domestic intercourse, it will surely apply with still more peculiar and more striking force to a personage on whose judgment and discretion depend the health of orators and the eloquence of statesmen; whose indiscretion might destroy the prandian comfort of a city alderman, confound the reason of the political leaders of the people, convert the fervor of patriotism into the fever of disaffection, and aggravate the enthusiasm of a captain of the guards into the frenzy of coxcombical impertinence. By your wine, Sir, the spirit of British liberty may be in-

flamed into democratic frenzy; by your meat, Sir, the stomach of a ministerial orator may be oppressed, till his mental faculties sympathize with the disordered organization of his digestive powers. In your taste and integrity, I therefore implicitly confide: your loyalty to your sovereign is testified by the first emblem by which you have chosen to distinguish the Crown and Anchor, from the Bull and Mouth, or the Mitre, and your attachment to your King is a guarantee for your interest in the welfare of his subjects. The anchor typifies the trust reposed in you by that nation which has chosen you to be the director of its feasts, and the provider of its wines: which has committed to your power the dismemberment of its turkies, and the arrangement of its apples; and which boasts that under your auspices the most enlightened of its senators, and the most able of its statesmen have been overcome in bacchanalian contests, or gained the prize of heliogabalian prowess.

Far be it from so humble an individual as myself, to presume that the cursory remarks which my confined limits will permit me to advance, should tend either to your entertainment or instruction; but the multiplicity of your pursuits may be presumed to have diverted your attention from those more trifling details, which it is the lot of the humble retainers to literature to examine with precision: while you prepare the sauce for your turbot, and whip up the materials of your syllabub, it cannot be expected that you should be accurately versed in the history of the Athenian fishes, or intimately acquainted with the opinions of Columella respecting the most favorable pasture for the nourishment of the lacteal vessels. Permit me therefore to inform you that turbot was the favorite dish of the Emperor Tiberius; that on the table of Domitian it was not unusual to contemplate a rhombus of three hundred weight; that they were generally baked in vinegar, and eaten with a mixture of oil and honey; that their hearts are declared by Dioscorides, Chap. 3, Sect. 4, to be of sovereign efficacy in cases of mania, and that a

man named Heliogalipotomos in the reign of king Sotamikus swallowed three of them, each weighing 2 cwt. at a mouthful. Rabbits, I humbly suggest to your recollection, were totally unknown to the Grecians; but the hares of Attica were delicious. They were stuffed with sheep's trotters, the liver of dogs, and the brains of peacocks. Sorry I am, that a bird so glorious in its plumage, and so beauteous to the vision, should never grace the table of the Crown and Anchor. To effect its introduction is an object worthy of the activity and intelligence by which, Sir, you are so particularly distinguished: if the director of the greatest tavern in the world be unable to accomplish an undertaking so important, to whom else can we apply in our distress? On what other master of the feast shall we rely for the improvement of taste, and the advancement of culinary knowledge?

Lobster-sauce has been regarded in all ages as the first luxury of the judicious epicure. The Phocians erected a statue to the inventor of this admirable stimulant of the languid appetite. Even the sphynxes of the Egyptians, which have been the occasion of so much dispute among philosophers, are commemorative merely of the female who first discovered that certain shell-fish became red by boiling; the famous enigmatical inscription on the tomb of *Ælius Lælius Crispus* only records the interment of a lobster without its shell; and the crab, a member of the same family, is raised by the suffrage of antiquity to the circle of the zodiac, and takes his annual round in the train of the Virgin and protected by the Lion.

Vain would it be for me to enumerate the various articles of luxurious sustenance over which your practiced eye is accustomed to expatiate. But ungrateful indeed is the hand that holds a pen, if it do not involuntarily trace the praises of *the goose*. The cackling of that bird saved the capital of the Roman city, its wings supply to your attendant nymphs, the fair syrens of the mop and the shovel, the place of hearth-brushes, and (excuse me, Sir, for the casual mention of a name so unusual to your ears)

dishelouts: they supply to the schoolboy the means of imitative thunder, and to the satirist the weapons of literary warfare; from the leg of a goose a Canning has received the most exquisite delight, and its less important members have supplied Mr. Sheridan with many a delicious *merry-thought*.

Let me suggest to you with that deference that has always characterised my family, and with that feeling of grateful affection with which all who have partaken of your festive board must be forcibly impressed, the momentous nature of the trust confided to your care, and the importance of a discriminative and unbiassed choice in the selection of your servants. It cannot be disguised from your observation that there are men who fill the office of scullion with no other view than to profit by the gluttony of their fellow-creatures, that a reform in your kitchen has been called for only by men, who wish to participate in the luxuries it produces, that the adulteration of your wine is complained of only by those who wish to supply you with their own commodities,—that your steward is only abused and insulted by your Welch servant Gwillim, because he wishes to get into his place, that your present assistants have given universal satisfaction to every lover of port and venison, and that to dismiss them will diminish that respect which your manly and judicious conduct has excited in the breast of every ardent supporter of the present order of “existing circumstances.”

It only remains for me to assure you, that on all occasions I have felt and continue to feel the most unalterable attachment to you and your beauteous family; and that not even the *hautgout* of the most delicious leveret would afford a gratification more sincere or more exquisite than that with which I hasten to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your respectful servant,

TIMOTHY TAPMAN.

We readily admit that the preceding letter is fully equal in literary and argumentative merit to many others which

have been lately addressed "to the King," "to the Prince Regent," "to His Royal Highness the Duke of York," &c. &c.: but its author has made a mistake too egregious to remain unnoticed, in supposing Mr. Simkin to be his own cook and confectioner. Common-place declamation is and always will be the prevailing fault of periodical writers, but there is some merit in attempting to cloath superficial thoughts in language neither disgusting by its grossness, nor perplexed in its construction; and for our own parts we would prefer the virulence of the *Courier* to the scurrility of the *Statesman*.

THE PRINTER OF COMBUSTIBLES.

IN our fourth number, the attention of our readers was called by a correspondent to an extraordinary advertisement apparently implicating the character of Thomas Gillett, and calling upon that person either to refute the allegations it contains, or to conduct himself in his intercourse with the creditors of Sir Richard Phillips in a manner less liable to provoke animadversion. From the *calm contempt* with which he had treated the advertisement itself, we had little suspicion that to copy it with a few trifling comments would have drawn down upon us the whole weight of legal vengeance; but strange as it may appear to our readers, notwithstanding Mr. Stockdale's offer of reward had been inserted in the *Times*, so early as September the 1st, 1810, and had been suffered to pass without observation and reply for more than *six months*, its repetition in the *Scourge* was succeeded by an immediate notice of action for libel, and Mr. Gillett employed the whole of the 1st of April in writing letters to the booksellers, containing the most furious denunciations of legal vengeance in case they should sell a single copy of the work.

His threats were disregarded by the most respectable

booksellers of the Row, and can excite in our bosoms no other sentiment than compassion. The better part of valour is discretion: he should have considered within himself before he attempted to seek redress by an action for damages, whether it was not possible to subject us to the expences of legal process at rather too great a hazard to his own interest and reputation. We are not anxious for his ruin—the hesitation of the fire offices to remunerate his losses is in itself sufficiently distressing; but if he *will* compel us to adduce unpleasant evidence, he may be doomed to lament his own indiscretion, but cannot justly accuse *us* of vindictive cruelty.

With the history of experimental tinder-boxes, and nocturnal consultations, we are better acquainted than either Mr. Gillet or his patron may believe; and our knowledge of life and manners is at least so extensive as to inform us that the man who at one time is apparently obliged to sell a few detached books for the purposes of immediate subsistence, and is able a few weeks after to send his daughter to a riding-school, must possess some extraordinary means of rising from poverty to affluence.

By some curious mistake Mr. Gillet's notice of action was served upon a gentleman who is not connected with the work. After gratifying his propensity to bluster on the supposed printer, his next object was to arrive at a knowledge of the editor. For this purpose he hit upon a contrivance which does equal credit to his coadjutor and himself.

After due deliberation, the following letter was composed and transmitted.

85, Hatton Garden.

“ Mr. Johnson's compliments.—Saw for the first time, some hours ago, and read with *so much pleasure and satisfaction* the contents of No. 4, that Mr. Johnson wishes for a private interview with the *editor himself here*, in order to lay before him a new and an interesting plan for his literary recreation. Although highly approving of the talents displayed in his publication, yet being totally unacquainted with him, he cannot address him by name. All, however, which Mr. Johnson expects is, that whether the plan alluded to be or be not

congenial with the wishes or views of the editor, the interview and communication will be considered in that confidential manner between one gentleman and another.

"Mr. J. will be at home this afternoon from six to eight o'clock, or to-morrow at the same time, or the editor may appoint his own time by a two-penny post letter."

When our readers are informed that this letter was sent in conjunction with Gillet, and for the purpose of betraying the editor, by a man whose name is not Johnson, who has been remarkable for the licentiousness of his pen, and who now affects the manners, and assumes the consequence of *one of the literati*, he will probably allow that the infamy of the agent was not much less than the folly of his employer. We do not remember a single instance in which the word gentleman has been more grossly abused than in the concluding paragraph of this sincere and honorable epistle. If Mr. Johnson expected that his stratagem would succeed, he must have supposed the editor of the Scourge to be as weak as Sir Richard, and as obstinate as Gillet. The triumvirate were congratulating themselves on the prospect of having the editor in their power, while they were, in fact, only furnishing new materials for satirical castigation, and in less than half an hour after the receipt of the letter, we discovered MR. JOHNSON to be no less a person than PETER STUART, the late EDITOR of the ORACLE, the ultimate servant and libeller of Pitt, and Fox, and Sidmouth; the furnisher of falsehoods to the Chronicle, and the confidential friend of the Printer of Combustibles!!! And this is the man who had the impudence to write to the editor of the Scourge in the character of a gentleman, to offer him new sources of "*literary recreation*," and to demand a confidential interview! We hope that so shameless a minister to litigious frenzy will henceforth be excluded from all respectable society. When compared with a poacher for evidence, an informer is a dignified and honorable character.

We have been assured indeed that within the last month

Mr. Gillet has displayed evident symptoms of insanity, and the following paper has been transmitted to us, accompanied by such testimonials as induce us to confide in its authenticity. If it be an authentic production, there is some excuse for the printer of combustibles; as for the epistolary poacher, we believe that his judgment remains as sound as his wit is brilliant.

A true Narrative of the Madness of Thomas Gillet, compiled from the Memoranda of Sir Phelim Phlebottom.

April the 1st. Called in. Found my patient walking backwards and forwards in his chamber, apparently in great agony; gnashing his teeth, stamping violently on the floor; his face extremely flushed; his two front teeth more prominent than I had observed them to be during former paroxysms; his breathing difficult, pulse 120. Talked much of having been *scourged*, though on examination I could find upon him no marks of personal violence. Thinks his house *too hot to hold him*: mentions the name of Sir Richard Phillips with violent demonstrations of passion. His usual oaths, "D---n the tinder box." "Curse his late visits." Talks much of lawyers, and after weeping for two or three minutes over the lashes that he imagines himself to have received, suddenly starts up, kisses his hand, and exclaims, "Dear dear Mrs. Clarke! we have been scourged together, let us be jointly revenged." Frequently mentions an *oracle* that he wishes to consult. Ordered a strait waistcoat. Apply a blister to the nape of the neck. A cathartic to purge off the bad humours in the morning.

April the 2d.—Found him still cherishing the idea of his having been scourged, and discovered, to my great surprise, that he had written an account of his supposed wounds to various friends in Paternoster-row. His frenzy seems to have increased since yesterday, for he now believes himself to have been scourged, first with a sheet of paper, and afterwards with an engraving. So extraor-

dinary a case has not before occurred within the range of my practice. Raves about Mrs. Bennet. Seems very anxious to consult his oracle. At one time he let drop a hint that this *oracle* was named Johnson; and knowing that there is sometimes method in madness, as well as that my patient was a man of *letters*, I thought he might wish to read a paper in the Rambler. Unfortunately the passage on which his eye first glanced, was the account of a Greek philosopher, who sat down to enquire whether fire always burned in a *circle*. This threw my patient into a new paroxysm. The following were among the exclamations uttered, and the subjects that disturbed him:

“D——n the tinder-box. Oh, Sir Richard, Sir Richard, why did you remain so late? I burn, I burn, as when the western wind drives the o’erpowering flame through moors of heath. Dear Mrs. Bennett, my wife * * * *. D——n * * * * *. Yes! let it even end like my affair with Mawman; the insurance money shall go to pay another thousand. I little thought when it took place, that any body was near us. Oh, that *pots de chambre* had never existed! that nocturnal streams could cure the scolding of a wife! that indecency could be expiated by a journey to Margate!

We have no personal antipathy to Mr. G., he is nearly unknown to us, and if any of the preceding observations appear more acrimonious than is consistent with the spirit of Christian meekness, let our readers ascribe our warmth to that indignation which we necessarily feel at the obtrusive impertinence of a being “who can only escape censure, while he passes without observation.”

It is necessary, however, to make a few observations on the peculiar *consistency* with which he comes forward in the character of a prosecutor for libel. For more than two years he was the printer of a publication called the *Satirist*, and from his press have proceeded productions more calumnious than ever disgraced the literature of the country. He has been frequently indicted, and many actions for damages have been brought against him which

were only warded off by a timely compromise. The attacks upon Sir Richard were the only parts of these publications to which his name was not affixed, and even these we have reason to believe were actually if not nominally printed at his office. He was the printer of the most libellous of all works, Mrs. Clarke's book against the Duke of York, and endeavoured by every means in his power to prevent its suppression. And this is the man who now comes forward to vindicate his immaculate character by an appeal to the laws of his country! We exhort him to discretion, and would say to him with equal earnestness and candor: This time "*go thy way and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee.*"

THOUGHTS ON A PRISON.

SIR,

So many of our most popular periodical writers are now immured within the walls of Newgate or the King's Bench, and a prison is so frequently the *domus ultimus* of literary men, on other accounts than their supposed disloyalty, that it may not be totally without its use to enquire what advantages are to be derived from a reasonable duration of confinement. Poets and orators have exhausted all their powers in the celebration of a garret, and why may not a humble correspondent of the SCOURGE attempt to eulogize the comforts and advantages of a gaol? The European Magazine has presented us with an accurate view of a court adjacent to your printing-office, merely because it was honored by the residence of the poet Goldsmith, when he paid a weekly sixpence for his lodging; and who can tell but that in the course of another century we shall have a view of the cell in which Gale Jones was sentenced to starve according to law, and a perspective sketch of the spider's web that overhangs the study of the late editor of the Day?

It is to be hoped, however, that the period is arriving

when imprisonment for libel shall be regarded as inconsistent with the spirit of the English constitution ; but I am afraid that the period will never arrive in which great philosophers shall not be in debt, or when their creditors will take their paper in lieu of Bank notes. My present observations, therefore, shall be directed to the peculiar cases of those persons, whom John Doe and Richard Roe have honored with their especial favor and protection. There is, indeed, a greater connection between poetry and law than would at first sight be supposed. they both deal in fiction, and to be actively engaged in either of them will reduce you to beggary.

The power of abstraction is the first great requisite of the poet or the philosopher, and since every faculty is strengthened by the difficulties that oppose its exercise, the necessity when you first enter a prison of remaining three or four days, (if a twelvemonth so much the better) in the same room with half a dozen people, promiscuously engaged in talking, swearing, singing, dancing, fiddling, cooking, hammering, and sleeping, must be highly favorable to the improvement of this talent. A man assailed by so many discordant sounds, naturally forms to himself a kind of artificial insensibility ; he sees nothing that passes, and hears nothing that is uttered. To do this is the very acme of philosophy, and to do this you are compelled by every motive of self-defence. But a man cannot shut his mind or his senses to external objects, without the abstract employment of his faculties, ergo the arrangements of a prison are favorable to meditation, and therefore to poetry and philosophy !

Arrogance is usually admitted to be the general accompaniment of literary superiority. Now this vice is effectually cured by a few weeks residence in a prison. *There* the great doctrines of equality are admitted as implicitly as at the most sanguinary period of the French revolution. Prisoners are equal. Your servant has a right to teach you good manners, your milkman may tell you that you want shaving, and your shoe-black that he would advise

you to be more sparing of your jokes. If your errand-boy chuses to play a little longer than ordinary you must leave your philosophy to set out on the purchase of a farthing candle, or a pennyworth of cheese. You are thus reminded of what, in the profundity of your meditations you may have foolishly forgotten, that the sons of Adam are all formed of flesh and blood, that poetry will not wash your cravat, that a man of genius has no natural authority over an idiot, that a knowledge of Eschylus will not light your fire, and that it is very possible to write verses equal to those of Homer without being able to have your shoes mended without paying a cobbler. These are truths which you were probably too wise to learn before your committal, and from the day of that event you may date the commencement of your progress in *practical* philosophy.

Nothing contributes so much to the confirmation of virtue as the contemplation of wickedness ; “ vice to be hated needs but to be seen,” and in a prison she is seen pretty plainly : an imprisoned philosopher has therefore the strongest excitement to detest her.

To the exercise of the imagination a prison is peculiarly favourable. Circumscribed within the narrow limits of its walls, your fancy has free scope to expatiate. Absence embellishes the most distant scenes, and gives a charm to the remembrance of landscapes, that while they are before our eyes afford us no sensible pleasure. The cool tranquillity of a sequestered grot cannot be described so forcibly by him who enjoys its freshness, as by him who contrasts it with the noisy and bustling scene which he is hourly subjected to witness. A bed of roses never appears so soft to the feeling of its luxurious occupier as to the imagination of him who is reclining on a couch of straw ; the murmur of a rivulet does not tinkle so delightfully to the traveller who reposes on its banks, as to the mental ear of him who has not seen a current of water for many months. The author who looks at the cobweb in the corner of his window, is best calculated to

describe with poetical enthusiasm the shade of the sycamore; and the cackling of a hen naturally inspires him to celebrate with appropriate feeling the melancholy warblings of the nightingale. As distance enforces the impression, and embellishes the charms of natural scenery, absence gives a more mellow and sentimental colouring to every scene of domestic life. Men who have always been quarrelling with their families, when confined in prison, look back to their domestic circle with lingering regret; they only remember the caresses of their wives and children, and forget how often they have been scolded by the mother, and how frequently they have been obliged to beat the infant. Any thing is better than confinement: they are thus cured of misanthropy; they learn to look on all that is really valuable with complacency, and to imagine that going to church may be just as pleasant as spending their time in the tap-room of the prison.

That residence in a prison improves our knowledge of the world cannot be denied. The useful art of distinguishing real from pretended friends can only be acquired within the walls of Newgate or the Bench. The faithless mistress and the scoundrel confident may here be detected at no other expence than the sacrifice of your vanity to conviction.

I need scarcely mention that philosophic contempt of dress which is naturally attendant on confinement. Whoever wishes to be cured of foppery, should take refuge in a prison; and as this is a step to which the generality of fops must have involuntary recourse, it is fortunate that the disease should be usually accompanied by the cure.

I have supposed that the persons to whom the preceding observations peculiarly apply are among the poor residents in a prison; for the spectacle of a literary man living in confinement on the property of his creditors, I should hope is rarely to be seen. His principles, it may be presumed, would elevate him above such flagrant villainy; if he could find any one willing to trust him

above the value of an Easter suit. But after all that I have said in favour of a prison, permit me to assure you, that with me it has no other recommendation than as having afforded the means of introduction to

A NEW CORRESPONDENT.

London, 21st April, 1811.

THE REVIEWER. No. II.

The Damnation of Ruvomisha, a Poem, by Rodrigo Maddocks, Esq. Longman and Co. 1811. 1l. 11s. 6d.

After the manner of the Edinburgh Annual Register.

OF the triumvirate who undoubtedly form the galaxy of modern English literature, certain it is, that the author of this excellent poem is the most preeminent. A wreath shall be entwined round the brow of Maddocks more everlasting than the perennial rose : sweet are his pathetic strains, and sublime his elevated *ones* ; but, reader, judge not by what our partiality may tell thee, but by what thou thyself mayest be enabled to discover.

The poem opens with the burial of Ruvomisha, the best beloved of men, in one of the pits of that barbarous island situated in an ocean yet unseen and unvisited by man, extending ten thousand leagues behind the furthest boundaries of European discovery, composed only of coral, intersected by rivers of young children, the offspring of the prolific rock that foams with cataracts of infants, over canopied by a heavenly air-pump, that composed of ethereal gems admits the light of the sun while its inhabitants remain in vacuo. The knob of this celestial air-pump, of which the circumference at the base is more than thirty thousand leagues, acts as a prism, and instead of transacting business or pursuing pleasure in the full glare of mixed and adulterated light, as in this sublunary sphere, its inhabitants act and sport in the colours of the rainbow. The warriors fight only in the plain of red, and the scenes of carnage are thus rendered less dreadful

to the eye by the impossibility of distinction between the natural colour, and that which is produced ; married men who have no business to transact business from home live in the stripe of green ; loyalists reside under the beams of true blue ; taylors under the violet, as denoting a mixture of colours ; fruiterers are illuminated by the orange rays, and gardeners by the pink. Virgins reside in a sequestered spot, on which a plain of white is thrown by the rotation of a *Medurabadian* wheel. Beneath the centre of the knob is a patch of black, that serves not only for the mouth of a burying pit, but for the accommodation of the mourners. Such is the condition of salvation to every inhabitant of this island, that if in their descent they can make more than forty marks with their great toe, they are numbered among the most worthy worshippers of Brahmab, and exalted to participation in the bed of Veshnoo ; but if unfortunately at the moment of expiration, the nail has been lately cut, or if their fall be too rapid to admit of the full number of strokes, they are doomed to suspension in the air, as sieves for filtering the dew of night : their skins become porous, and the liquid that is thus filtered is the nectar of Rowli Powli the father of the gods : nor can this dreadful punishment be remitted till they can find a man who is swifter than the wind, with an eye more bright than the sun, his teeth sharper than the lightning's fork, and whose hands are shaped like a pair of compasses, making an angle of thirty degrees, and circumscribing a circumference of one thousand miles. The spirit of Ruvomisha has already struck his toe thirty-nine times against the sides of the pit, when his toe-nail breaks and he is immediately whirled 27,648,219,654,879½ miles, into the vast expanse of space and suspended as a dew-filterer. The unhappy Whybuma, the fair mistress of Ruvomisha, knows by internal sympathy the fate of the best beloved of men, and resolves to procure his deliverance by setting out in search of the swifter-than-the-wind, sharper-than-the-lightning, compass-spreading-hand-man. At the furthest extremity

of space, beyond the boundaries of Asiatic knowledge, is an island called Deglana, the habitation of the Tonirbs, a wonderful race, who for more than three hundred years since the *accouchement* of Moyorsa, the mother of Casyapa, have been renowned for riding in the air, in the unhorsed chariots of heaven called Loonlabba. Thither the fair Whybuma sends her messenger, who returns not only with the celestial car, but with a Tonirb, the inhabitant of the before-mentioned region. The dress and appearance of this strange being are described with great beauty and detail.

Onward they steer'd thro' the aerial ocean,
 So smooth their course thro' the celestial wave,
 That but the approach of land denotes their motion,
 While shouts of triumph hail the adventurous brave.
 And when the gazeas vessel touch'd the ground,
 So strong rebound the trembling earth return'd,
 That but the cordage round the basket bound,
 Prevented him from being overturn'd.
 Then out he stept with solemn place and grave :
 For such a love the Ephesian dame had mourn'd.

Upon his head a black round tower * he bore,
 Surrounded by a dark but empty moat :
 A silken band by silver lock'd before,
 Relieved the darkness of the dreary ditch ;
 The circling base his brow sublime surrounded,
 And o'er his manly forehead cast a shade ;
 That forehead still in stores of wisdom rich,
 (For wisdom known was Degalana's shore) ;
 In his capacious mind each scheme afloat
 That judgment guides, or ignorance astounded.

Beneath his chin by India's loom enwoven
 Deglana's sacred *cravata* he wore ;
 In circling folds his alabaster neck
 It curiously enfolded ;
 And in a knot mysterious tied it seem'd,
 Embossed by circles twain from whence proceeded
 Two points as emblems of the sacred fire !

* If we had not been criticising a poem on an Indian subject, we should have conjectured this to be a somewhat hyperbolical description of a hat !

Arrayed in blue, his robe but half way down
 His calf, not flowing, regularly descended,
 It's skirts half-parted, half-conjoined, contained
 Two deep receptacles from thence suspended.
 Where yet provision unconsum'd remained.
 And in the front a row of golden suns,

Encircled by the separated cloth,
 His garment clasp'd before two shining suns :
 Each wrist also illumin'd, and on both
 His skirts they glittered as his back he turn'd !
 The purest linen of Deglana's land,
 Was on that man ! his bosom too displayed,
 In rows, the skill of lovely damsel's hand,
 Or pleasing toil of some most favoured maid,
 Like furrows on the far extended plain,
 When Indian plowmen sows his precious ghee,
 White as the ray from Casyapa's throne,
 The eye delights to view its purity,
 Worthy of Deglana, and heav'n alone !

Muse of the morning, pure and chaste art thou,
 Nor shall one blush diffuse thy downy cheek :
 What garment cloath'd the parts unseemly nam'd
 I may not tell, but shape more exquisitely
 Defined, not fair Aurora e'er displayed.
 Thro' the light drapery of the morning cloud.
 In ——'s isle for manly beauty fam'd.
 Not one there was among the virgins meek.
 That envy'd not the heavenly-favour'd maid,
 Who of her lover's shape so justly proud,
 To the loud sound of dulcet minstrelsy,
 Arm locked in arm with him the car descended,
 While red and white upon her cheeks are blended.
 But further down towards her knees displaying
 Their colours gay, a knot of pendants flying,
 Circling below the knee the soft wind playing,
 As tho' the beauties of his limbs espying,
 Four silver moons, each side, in lustre shone,
 Like the gold suns employed, for splendor not alone !

His feet and legs encased in prisons twain,
 Yet voluntary prisons, seem'd as though
 A god up to the knees had one limb fixt
 In Etna black, the other in Vesuve,

Mountains as dark, but not so proudly shining ;
The vales of Italy, and see betwixt.
The lustre of their darkness did reprove
The brilliance of the current that below,
With silver arms this favor'd spot entwining,
Murmur'd the mellow tone of peace and love !

The Tonirb instructs Whybuma in the mode of managing the machine, but just as she ascends the car her foot slipping she falls into the river of infants, and is in imminent hazard of drowning, when the Tonirb rushes in after her, and they both sink to the bottom of the current. Now it is an established law of natural philosophy that the bottom of the current may be and generally is perfectly tranquil, while the surface is disturbed ; this was the case on the present occasion. On sinking to the bottom, Whybuma and the Tonirb discover to their great astonishment that they are in the midst of a school of children listening to the instructions of father Mimasterha the god of the river. He informs the disconsolate Whybuma that the machine brought from the land of Deglana is of no use beyond a certain height, but benevolently offers the use of four hundred of the swiftest runners among his children, from each of whom a leg being cut off, and boiled together with the aid of certain magical incantations, a new leg shall be produced that shall outstrip the swiftness of the outstripper-of-the-wind, and therefore be likely to overtake him and thus secure the salvation of Ruvomisha. After obtaining the consent of Whybuma he utters the following form of incantation.

Legs ! boil together ;
Not wind or weather,
Now shall harm ye.
Swifter-than-wind,
Ye shall never find,
Weariness shall warm ye.
This kettle is mine,
And in it I'll boil ye,
And none shall presume
To hurt or to spoil ye.

A million a minute,
Or the Devil is in it,
As one you shall travel
O'er grass and o'er gravel,
Thro' sea and thro' air,
Without trouble, or sorrow,
Without sorrow or care,
And be back by to-morrow, &c. &c.

The leg being fastened by a screw to a dumb-waiter on which Whybuma seats herself, she is conveyed before evening to the regions of filtration, where she beholds her lover suspended, and sees only a few paces before her the outstripper-of-the-wind. A race now takes place between the leg and the aforesaid outstripper, whose name is Mordibidivivehmaladyadibuh. The incidents of the race are extremely interesting. Twice does the outstripper escape by running round the point of a needle, followed by Whybuma and the leg; at length they arrive at Myio which is built of solid sunbeams. In the centre of this city, are four sandals, three of them are filled by legs similar to that by which Whybuma is conveyed. Two of these legs had formerly belonged to the queen of the country, and the third to its king, whose pair was ultimately rendered incomplete in the battle with the murderers of his spouse. It had been decreed by Casyapa that whenever a leg should be found exactly fitting the last sandal, the person to whom that leg had belonged should be immediately restored to life, become the possessor of the third leg, assume the government of the country, and walk away with the queen, who should be set upon her legs again at the same moment with himself. Now it so happened that the day at which the outstripper-of-the-wind, and the damsel Whybuma's magic leg arrived in the city of sunbeams, should be the very day of trial and election. As Whybuma entered the portal of the square, she beheld a thousand legs advancing to martial music, and found herself involuntarily drawn into the ranks by the leg which supported her. This leg marched

forward bearing the beauteous damsel, with greater energy and grace than any other leg: Whybuma received a *scrape* from each as a mark of homage, and they advanced to the place of the election. After all the other legs had tried their fortune, Whybuma's leg puts its foot into the sandal; it immediately closes, the bands embrace the ankle, and the crowd awaits in anxious expectation the growth of the destined monarch of the country.

Now the courteous reader will have the goodness to remember that this fortunate leg was manufactured from the leg of four hundred infants. Slowly rising therefore from the original leg, and joining by the loins to its neighbour, arose the bodies and heads of four hundred infants! Surprise and terror seized the multitude. That a king with four hundred heads, and each head the head of child a should be the monarch of a city built of sun-beams was most horrible. But the queen, now completed from the other pair of legs, after commanding silence, proposed the election of Whybuma as wet-nurse. The proposal is received with acclamation; the queen consents to live in a state of married viduity: at the request of her wetnurse, she orders the guards to surround the rainbow walls of the city; the outstripper-of-the-wind is thus taken prisoner, the salvation of Ruvomisha is accomplished, and, invited to the city of sunbeams, he and his lovely Whybuma live in uninterrupted felicity till the four hundred infants arrive at the age of twenty-one, when they quarrel with each other; their number is diminished daily two by two, till at length Watapittio and Migranio are the only remaining brothers. Migranio kills Watapittio, marries the queen, and remains the surviving and eternal sovereign of Akur-sedlyaltelual or the capital of sun-beams.

Upon the whole we are of opinion that the poem of which we have given the preceding abstract is nearly equal to the best performances of the school to which its author belongs. Its plot is not so extravagant as that of the *Curse of Kehama*, nor its versification so irregular as that of *Thalaba the destroyer*. Nothing in the story tha

we have analyzed can be compared with the octuple entrance of Kehama through eight different gates at the same instant of time, or with the orb compounded of a thousand little eyes kneaded into one. It must at the same time be admitted that if the author before us has not equalled the extravagance of Mr. Southey, he has not attained his sublimity of expression, nor is equally able to appreciate his own performances. We do not believe that Mr. Maddocks ever declared himself, in imitation of Mr. Southey, to be the first poet of the age; he probably thinks that to express his opinion of himself in this manner, would, if that opinion were impartial, be unbecoming, and if it were evidently the result only of vanity and impertinence, would have no other effect than to render its author ridiculous. The man who sits down with a deliberate design to convert anonymous criticism to the purposes of self-praise, must be lost to every sentiment of decency. The act is known at least to his printer or his bookseller; and to them the person who commits it can appear in no other character than that of a quack whose impudence is equal to his meanness.

A CHARACTER FROM REAL LIFE.

MESSALINA was the daughter of a private gentleman of Norfolk, and was married at the early age of fifteen to an officer of the guards, who was killed at the battle of Quebec. In the ardour of licentious passion she flew into the arms of General Moncton, who brought her to England, and gave her apartments in the same house with his youngest daughter, whose morals she soon corrupted, and whom she persuaded to elope with all the cash and trinkets to which she had access. At Harrowgate, to which place they run off with their booty, our heroine

formed a connection with a gentleman named Medhurst, under whose protection she was exalted to the situation of abbess to a nunnery in Pall-mall. Here she resided near twenty years in the undisturbed tranquillity of innocence, when her protector dying she was appointed priestess of the temple of the Cyprian Venus erected by Lord Barrymore.

In the lapse of four or five years she was too old and ugly for a situation requiring in more than a usual degree the talent of insinuation. Her vocation had been sufficiently profitable ; and his lordship's interest procured her customers to a brothel in Oxendon-street, that she was enabled to furnish, partly by his liberality, and partly by the money she had amassed in the course of her long and laborious services. Her appearance is that of a gentlewoman, and in all the arts that can administer to libidinous pleasure she is unrivalled. The seduction of female innocence has been the professed object of her study for the last forty years, and she is a perfect adept in all the mysteries of killing without murder.

It is not to be wondered at therefore that her house soon became the most fashionable, or at least the most notorious of the temples of recreation within a mile of Piccadilly. A crim. con. affair was seldom managed so successfully as when conducted through the mediation of her kind offices ; and Lords B. and S. have yet some reason to remember the conveniences of her house, and the pliancy of her temper.

A single establishment of this kind was unworthy of her comprehensive and enterprising genius. She, therefore, in conjunction with Jew King and Mrs. Morris, opened an elegant house in Morton-street ; her most fascinating Cyprians, after revelling one day in all the filth of prostitution, were sent hither on the next to personate *ladies of fashion*, and with the aid of their ingenious fortune-teller, some of them were soon accommodated with husbands. To support the expences of the house, as well as to give some degree of eclat to the establish

ment, one or two young ladies of real respectability and of great expectations, were introduced as visitors, and were cheated at cards in the most friendly of all possible manners.

The suppers were as good as the apartments were elegant. Needy adventurers were accommodated with wives on condition of a handsome premium immediately on gaining possession of the lady's fortune ; and men of rank and wealth were obligingly accommodated with wives who had no resemblance either visible or secret to old maids. Our heroine contrived in the course of two years to make a clear profit of thirty thousand pounds by the proprietorship of this establishment ; but her agent, Mrs. Morris, on its dissolution by the failure of John King, and by some unpleasant proceedings instituted on the part of an American colonel, was left to sustain the utmost extremity of indigence, and after vainly endeavouring to support herself by opening a dressmaker's shop in Berners-street, was at last reduced to take refuge in a workhouse.

Among the visitors of Mrs. Morris was an old gentleman who had formerly been confidential secretary to Madame d'Eon ; and now resided in the neighbourhood of Somerset-street Portman-square, on an annuity of three thousand pounds a year which he had purchased from a sum of money granted him by the French court as a remuneration for his services, in securing certain papers which that celebrated lady had attempted to destroy. The Chevalier de Vaisseau was a gentleman of elegant deportment, about six feet in height, of a thin person, and cadaverous countenance. He is a Frenchman of the old school, rather formal in his elegance, and ceremonious in his politeness ; but he is a very pleasing companion, possesses great variety of knowledge, an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and a temper not easily disturbed. He is however an enthusiast : on the common occasions of human life he suffers his imagination to outstrip his judgment, and as he prides himself extremely on the management of business, when he is once mounted on his hobby-horse, he

gallops away without caution or restraint. To him Messalina had been introduced by Mrs. Morris ; he was in want of a housekeeper and a librarian ; she appeared to be a woman of intelligence, and assumed the name of Stanhope. A Mrs. Stanhope resided in Duke-street, Portman-square. Mr. de Vaisseau enquired her character, and was informed that she was a woman of family and fortune. Elated with the thoughts of obtaining such a prize, he repeated his addresses with renewed ardor, and on the 5th day of May 1809, Eliza P. alias Honoria Stanhope " was led to the *hymeneal altar*" by the Chevalier de Vaisseau.

At the expiration of the honey moon Madame de Vaisseau mentioned for the first time certain estates that she inherited from her father on the banks of the Mississippi. The rents of these estates she had never been able to obtain, from her ignorance of that kind of business, and the impossibility to an unprotected woman of visiting America. The arrears she calculated to amount to a hundred and forty thousand, and the annual rent to be twelve thousand dollars. This account enflamed the imagination of the chevalier; the splendor of his lady's house gave him no doubt of her wealth; he wished to double his annuity, and what was a voyage across the Atlantic to a chevalier and a man of business? In the contemplation, however, of the risques of a sea voyage, and of the advantages to be derived from the wealth that would accompany him on his return, his loving wife persuaded him that it would be more prudent for him to sell his annuity before he set sail, and leave the purchase money in her hands. To this he consented, and after depositing all his cash except about a thousand pounds for necessary expences, and after a " bitter parting," he set out on his voyage to the Mississippi.

Great was his surprise to find after three months residence in the country, and notwithstanding the most indefatigable enquiries, that no one was able to point out to him the boundaries of his supposed estate. The name of

Honoria Stanhope had never before been heard of, and with *Harrington Farm* not one of the cultivators of land had the least acquaintance. The chevalier had no doubt of his wife's sincerity; he believed that the ignorance of the people arose from a conspiracy to defeat his just claims, and he reembarked for England to procure such plans and adopt such measures of redress as might enable him on a future visit to prevent the recurrence of similar disappointments.

On his arrival in M—— street, he gave his accustomed knock at the door, and not observing or not wondering that it should be opened by a strange servant, he bolted through the lobby, walked up stairs, and marched into the drawing room, with all the precipitation of a husband anxious to press his long parted *cara sposa* to his bosom. His sudden entrance discomposed the tranquillity of a lady and gentleman engaged in amorous dalliance; the lady screamed and fainted; the gentleman seized his cane, and laid it over the culprit's shoulders; while the servant supposing the intruder to be a thief, called the watch, and delivered him to its custody.

In the morning no one appearing against him, and his address being in his favour, he was discharged. But distracted by wonder and apprehension, he thought the best mode of explaining himself without subjecting himself to the recurrence of disagreeable circumstances, would be to communicate his situation by letter. Having made the proper enquiries, therefore, respecting the present owners of the mansion, he wrote to the lady apologizing for his mistake, and requesting information respecting Madame de Vaisseau. Mrs. L. returned for answer that she knew nothing of the lady, but that she had left that neighbourhood six months ago. Madame de V. had been accustomed to send billets for her husband, when she and the servants were out of town, to the Cambridge coffee-house. At the bar a billet had been left for him many months before, and its effect upon his mind may be easily conjectured from its purport.

SIR,

You being a catholic and I a protestant, my conscience won't allow that we should live together any longer. Besides, the register having been entered with an erroneous name, which if you had loved me you would have enquired into, the whole affair is quite contrary to the law. I have left you eight hundred pounds at Mr. Drummond's, and shall have arrived in America about the time fixed for your return from thence to England. Take care how you follow me; and be content. Thank you for all past favours; but let me advise you for the future not to believe that you are the wisest man that ever lived, or that a fond woman cannot exist without you. Say your prayers, give up raking, and live like a christian.

Your affectionate

*The Chevalier de Vaisseau,
Cambridge Coffee House.*

H. S.

"Old and ugly" as she is, the lady is now the house-keeper of the celebrated American orator Mr. R. The Chevalier himself has returned to France, by the especial favor of Buonaparte, whose motive for granting him his protection may be the hope of obtaining the remaining papers of the late Chevalier. He resides on his family estate; drinks, as in duty bound, destruction to the English; and believes all women to be devils in disguise!

SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE.

SIR,

I PERFECTLY agree with your friend B. L. L. in your last month's number, p. 314, upon the constituent principles of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, of which I may still be a member, if their clerk's neglect of calling for my subscription these two years, has not caused my name to be removed. I have long since discovered their profession and practice to be widely different. What delin-

quents they have brought before the public, were poor wretches whom their agents had suborned by the lure of money to sell improper books, on purpose to found a public prosecution, and have the credit of doing *something*. Now, Mr. Scourge, these books argue a considerable expence in getting them up, and must issue from some considerable press, and why not seek for the producers or printers of these things? The task is too invidious to mention names in your Magazine, but I can assure you that the notoriety of the matter is so obvious that without seeking much about, half a dozen opulent book and print-sellers have several hundreds of pounds invested in this sort of property, the great profit upon which, from the secrecy of the sale, induces them to run the hazard, which, if detection should take place, may be accommodated by the society for about twenty pounds charges; a note may be given to their solicitor at two months, and the public is never informed of any thing that has been done. Another circumstance of delusion is, that these single copies are burnt; but I much doubt this fact, as it has never yet been done publicly, or even at the desire of the party forfeiting the article. For a long while their agent and informer, one Richard Grey, carried himself so infamously that his oath at last was not credited, and after they discharged him he was transported for a felony.

There are hundreds of different articles printed and circulated of which the society know not so much as the names, but which are not to be had by sending such fellows or runners as they do. Fifty or sixty pounds with good management might bring up twenty or thirty books of different descriptions from the original proprietors. Perhaps you may smile at what follows, but I can assure you as a fact, that a great impression on a large size, has lately been imported from the presbyterian capital of Scotland, and were the society willing to ascertain the fact, they might be introduced to the factor in London, for the purchase of twenty-five, for a less number of copies is not parted from the stock.

This would be becoming the suppressors of vice, but the contrary is the support of it, insomuch as it enhances the prices of such articles, and the mention of their proceedings in their reports sets all the world enquiring after such books. A noted picture-shop under the nose of magistracy in the neighbourhood of York-street, Covent Garden, sells abundance of these articles by the vehicle of women of the town, whose nightly attendance at taverns and the play-houses enables them to deal largely in this way with the gentlemen. If the society is above obtaining information, and only tries to triumph over poverty that is defenceless, they must be despised by all observers, and merit the continual sarcasms thrown upon them in the papers. B. L. L.'s complaint against F. H. is ill founded, that book was never the W. P. which is another work that has somehow gained a wrong name: for an account of the publication of the first look into the 6th vol. of the Monthly Review, which clearly marks the distinction.

Yours,

JOHN COLVILLE GRANT.

Greville-street.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

WHETHER the bill which has been so long before the house will be forwarded through it during the present session, or whether it will not be finally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. There are not more than a dozen members who appear to have any distinct idea upon the subject: they all wish that the existing laws on the subject of imprisonment should be altered, but they are all afraid of innovation. As the number of creditors is greater than that of debtors actually confined, the petitioners against several clauses of the bill are numerous and importunate: the moneyed interest is decidedly averse

to its adoption, and there only remain to support it in its progress the few who permit themselves to be influenced by no other motive than a desire to perform their duty conscientiously ; who will not sacrifice the happiness of their fellow creatures to the convenience of a friend ; who do not believe all debtors to be scoundrels ; and who have the courage to support what their understandings tell them to be right.

No act of legislative cruelty can be greater than that of continually professing a readiness to relieve a large body of men from protracted suffering, yet still deferring the promised measure of humanity on every trifling occasion, and at every frivolous suggestion. It were better that an attempt for the relief of insolvency should not be made at all, than that it should be languidly pursued, or finally defeated. We should suppose, that on a great public measure like that supported by Lord Redesdale, the sentiments of the legislature could be collected, before he ventured to introduce a bill which cannot be rejected without inflicting on many thousands of unfortunatesufferers the most cruel disappointment. The country demands at least that if the present bill do not pass, its place shall be supplied, during the present session, by some other measure equally calculated for the relief of insolvency. Supposing the creditor to demand the utmost severity of deserved punishment, more than four fifths of those who are now suffering *imprisonment for misfortune* have already been subjected to longer confinement than can be legally inflicted on a pickpocket or a member of the Vere-street society. To be deprived of liberty for three months is a punishment fully equal to any indiscretion of which an insolvent debtor can have been guilty ; and for the wilful and premeditated obtention of credit without a design to pay, we do not ask that the present punishment should be remitted.

Lord Redesdale's bill seems well calculated to remedy the existing absurdities of the debtor and creditor law, and to prevent the recurrence of those cruelties which have been inflicted on the victims of misfortune, at the

pleasure of every malignant or exasperated plaintiff. But there are some clauses which are equal, in the measure of their injustice, to the most obnoxious parts of the present system. Such are the exceptions by which a debtor for crim. con. is imprisoned for ten years, and every individual who has been liberated under the bill, shall be liable to be called on by his creditors as soon as he possesses *any* amount of property clear of all deductions. In whatever way this last clause may operate, its effect must be oppressive or pernicious. At the very moment when a person liberated by the act is raising himself above distress, and is about to employ a trifling surplus of capital in the extension or consolidation of his business, his creditor pounces upon him with an execution, and reduces him to the situation in which he stood at the very beginning of his toils. Under such circumstances there is no stimulus to perseverance in honest industry; that superfluity of gain which under a more propitious order of things would be laid by as a resource against misfortune, or employed to extend the circle of his business, if the bill passes under its present form will be squandered in improvidence. But the most serious evil of the clause is the encouragement that it holds out to fraud and perjury. Its operation may be evaded by affidavits of fictitious debts, and by other artifices of which the iniquity is lost in the expedience.

The clause by which the debtor on an action of crim. con. is subjected to ten years imprisonment implies a direct inculcation that adultery in a poor man is more criminal than in a rich one. The adulterer of five thousand a year, against whom two thousand pounds damages have been given, shall scarcely suffer any degree of personal inconvenience; whilst an officer, who has no other dependence than his pay, who has been equally exposed to temptation, and against whom the same amount of damages has been given, in a case of a nature exactly similar, shall languish away the years of manhood in a prison. To make the amount of damages, when compared with the fortune of the defendant in such cases, the criterion of guilt and the measure of punishment, is equally contrary

to reason and justice. If this system of jurisprudence be extended to any considerable length, a carter shall be hanged for murder, while a viscount shall, on the payment of a handsome fine, be permitted to violate the most sacred duties, and perpetrate the most atrocious crimes in undisturbed impunity.

The circumstances under which a debt was contracted should never be the subject of enquiry after the arrest. In cases of fraud, for instance, the creditor knew, or ought to have known the laws of his country; by proceeding in a civil action he has deprived himself of all pretence to proceed at any future period in a criminal process; he has chosen that remedy which seemed best to him, and it is worse than cruelty, to give him the power, in the first instance, of swearing to a debt, and in the second, of preferring a criminal indictment.

But, supposing that he shall only be empowered to prolong the duration of his debtor's imprisonment, it cannot be doubted for a moment that the legislature will shorten the proposed term of ten years to five. Even then the principle of the clause will be contrary to the whole spirit of the English law. If the prisoner be supposed guilty of fraud, let him be brought to trial; and let not an equivocal compromise between debt and felony be a distinguishing feature of any part of the proceedings. To vest in the court the power that is usually exercised by juries, and to render the dignitaries of the bench not only the expounder of the law but the judges of the fact, is not within the power of the legislature itself. It is contrary to the express letter of the original and sacred instrument, by which our rights were first defined and secured. By the present bill the question of guilt or innocence is left to the judges; and we have no hesitation in declaring that whoever either directly or indirectly shall promote an innovation so extraordinary, will deserve the execration of every Englishman, who either retains a sentiment of personal independence, or feels the slightest interest in the happiness of his countrymen.

The clause by which it is intended that no one shall be

arrested for a less sum than twenty pounds, has only one recommendation in its favor; it will render tradesmen more circumspect in granting credit; but this advantage might be obtained in some other way less open to objections. If the clause be not rejected, a debtor who fears arrest, instead of paying his creditors such a sum as shall reduce the original debt below ten pounds, will leave a balance of £19. 19s. 6d.; and to those who know how frequently this circumstance is likely to occur, scarcely any other argument against the clause will be necessary. Besides, if a taylor or shoemaker have an account against a customer of £15, he will be disposed, if he have any doubts of that customer's honesty, to let him have goods to the value of five pounds more, that he may be able to arrest him in case of emergency. When the amount of a debt is only five or six pounds, the creditor cannot arrest, and does not think such a sum worth the trouble or possible expence of an execution. But if the clause be adopted, since from £12 to £20 is a sum too considerable to be lost by a tradesman without serious inconvenience, he will run the hazard of litigation. An action will be brought in the court of common pleas; if the defendant suffers judgment to go by default the exemption from arrest has afforded him no advantage, but an opportunity of running away; but if, as will usually be the case, he puts in a plea for the purpose of gaining time, expence will be added to expence, process will succeed process, and this clause which was intended to secure the subject from oppressive, unjust, or causeless arrest, will have drawn him into an endless scene of litigation, equally destructive to his plaintiff and himself.

If these clauses be rejected, the bill will be well calculated to produce the effects for which it is intended, and we would rather that the clauses should be adopted than that it should not pass. Our prisons are not only the habitations of misfortune, but the receptacles of vice; and not all the exhortations of all the clergymen within eight miles of St. Paul's, can do half the benefit to religion or morality that is produced by the liberation of a single debtor from Newgate or the Fleet.

FROM A LUMINARY OF FASHION.

To the Editor of the Scourge.

MR. EDITOR,

WHEN I first heard of your *debut* in the literary world, I felt somewhat alarmed under the impression that you might have imbibed the prejudices of the vulgar and illiberal community against persons of fashion. This apprehension, however, has gradually subsided, and as you have not betrayed any hostile intentions against us luminaries of the mode, I begin to think that your disposition may be friendly, and that your ultimate object may be an alliance with the independent against the dependent classes of society.

I have determined to submit the subsequent defence of fashionable principles and conduct for insertion in your very entertaining miscellany, and thus to obtain proof of your real sentiments, and to convince myself either of the justice or injustice of my ideas respecting your ultimate views.

I myself, Sir, am a person of fashionable origin and habits. I am admitted to the Duchess of Devonshire's private parties, and to the Marchioness of Salisbury's Sunday amusements; and at Mrs. Richards's route a few days ago, I was handed to my carriage by the Prince Regent, to my inexpressible delight, and the utter confusion of all the females in company. The Marchioness of Hertford absolutely trembled so much with passion and envy, that she shook from her head-dress a very valuable diamond crescent which was not found until the following morning. I mention these things merely by the way, Sir; just to satisfy you that your new correspondent is qualified to speak upon those subjects which she intends to enlarge upon; and that the defence of the *ton* is not taken up by an ignorant or inexperienced advocate.

But now to the point. And first with respect to *religion*, a word which is absolutely become so unfashionable that the very sound of it is almost enough to bring on fainting fits: who, Sir, that is gifted with a more than common share of sense, spirit, genius, education, and inde-

pendence, can endure the idea of being obliged to be shut up every now and then for two or three hours in a church or chapel, without being allowed the use of the tongue, listening to dull monotonous harangues, which never contain any thing entertaining nor any thing new? What person of soaring disposition can bear a restriction of enjoyment? Who that has been accustomed to receive the adorations of all around her, in whose presence men of the first rank have basked as in the rays of the meridian sun, and whose levees have been always more numerously attended than those of the first lord of the treasury—who, I say, that has moved in such a commanding situation ought to kneel and degrade herself before an unseen, and for any thing she knows to the contrary, an imaginary being: such behaviour may be adapted to vulgar minds and mean conceptions, but that it should be expected from such as us is really shocking: I could as soon submit to have my levee forsaken by the members of the Four-in-hand (and the absence of such enlightened and exalted beings would be a severe blow to my happiness) as condescend to such horrid practices!

Do not misunderstand me, Mr. Editor, in this particular. It is neither the wish of myself nor the fashionable world in general *wholly* to discard religion. No, no: we have no such intention; we have no objection to be *decently* religious; but we will have our pleasures unfettered; we do not even refuse to go to church occasionally, when we have new carriages, new liveries, new dresses, &c. to display, or whenever we can exalt our own consequence, or render others envious by so doing. Provided, however, that the clergyman shall not exceed fifteen minutes in his discourse, and that we are allowed to come in at the close of the prayers; for is it not self-evident that, as we have all prayer-books, or can purchase them, we can as well look over this part of the service at our leisure, as to be bored with it at all times and in whatever temper we may chance to be?

We will attend oratorios, provided Catalani, Braham,

and Dickons, and a few other capital performers are engaged, and we will even go so far as to stand up while the hallelujah chorus is chaunting; and this, you must confess, is a very great concession on our parts. But we will go still further, and subscribe to two or three of the most fashionable charitable institutions, and thus give unequivocal proofs that fashion is a sphere congenial to benevolence.

But, Sir, in consideration of our performance of all these articles, we will not allow any interference in our Sunday parties. Our routs, concerts, *conversations* and card assemblies shall be held on any day we please; yes, Sir, and we will require still further indulgencies. We will also have our Sunday masquerades! Masquerades are carried on in places devoted to religious purposes, since most of those who attend go under some feigned character: this would be thought a devotee, that a critic, many go to ridicule what they hear, many to quiz the clergyman, some to set, and others to catch the fashion of the day. Very few, indeed, are so ignorant as to go for the sake of instruction on subjects of such doubtful importance to mankind.

Why, bless me, Sir, your very strict religion might do well enough for obsolete times, when the people, the wiseacres of the day, knew no better than to swallow all they heard, but, really now it is monstrous; and I am sure a gentleman of your sense will see it in the same point of view! I say it is quite monstrous to be told that we must not rattle the dear delightful dice, *because it is Sunday*; that we must not treat our friends with tea and cards, *because it is Sunday*; that we must not flirt with our sweet *cicisbeos*, nor give the latitude we wish to our words and actions, *because it is Sunday*; in short, that the very idea of *Sunday* is to be destructive to all pleasure. Do pray, Sir, write an essay upon this subject, and enforce the necessity of either abolishing the observance of this day altogether, or of rendering it more accommodating to the tastes of people of refined sentiments.

I dare say, Mr. Editor, you recreate in Kensington Gar-

dens and the Park occasionally. Can any thing be more rational and amusing for an hour on a Sunday, than such an enjoyment? The last time I was in the Gardens, there was the most delightful squeeze conceivable; it was indeed a dear confusion. Every one appeared fascinated beyond description, and it would have raised a smile on the countenance of a cynic to have seen the carmine blush which flushed the cheeks of Miss Gifford (cheeks, by the way, with which rosy nature has long since picked a quarrel) when her garter, faithless to the important trust reposed in it, deserted its post, and lay wide sprawling in the dust. Whether the sacred band was picked up by a peer, or whether it fell into the indelicate hands of a plebeian, I cannot pretend to say.

A great deal of fuss has also been made about *decorum*; but really those who assert that this point is not attended to in fashionable life, know nothing about the manners of the mode. As to decorum of conduct it is mere matter of opinion; as every thing is considered decorous in high life, because exalted minds are too independent to care about their own actions, or to give themselves any trouble about those of others. Because a lady of spirit prefers her gallant to her husband, we do not censure her, or throw a stigma on her moral character; but, on the contrary, we find an apology for her behaviour in the supposition that the former pays more attention to her, and shews a greater regard for her happiness than the latter. If a young lady makes a *faux pas*, and renders her lover and herself happy rather earlier than custom has prescribed, so far from loading her with reproaches, as too many would, we applaud that active independence of mind which raises her above the censures of the world, and leads her rather to consult her own felicity than the opinions of those who would not give themselves the slightest trouble to promote her welfare. The prevalent contempt of religious bigots and moral zealots has emanated from the same noble disposition; and as they are qualifications essential to one who seeks for fashionable celebrity, so they are equally requisite

to true enjoyment. A superstitious adherence to the customs of past ages, and a fear of a superior Being are the necessary auxiliaries of governments, since they tend to keep the rabble, who might otherwise be inclined to murmuring and rebellion, in a proper state of subjection.

I have been married some years, Mr. Editor, but no one that knows me can suppose for a moment that I would submit to the drudgery and submission that are commonly exacted from a wife. To be *bored* with children or with the management of servants, or the care of an establishment, for the due government of which I should be responsible to another, is shocking to the extreme only in idea, and how much more so would it be in practice? I always thought thus, and as soon as I had, by marriage, shifted my debts and difficulties, which were pretty numerous and formidable, to my husband's shoulders, I found an opportunity to quarrel with him so violently as to force him to come to a separation. With all my good management, however, I was forced to be contented with some share of trouble and vexation which attended the birth of a child, which I contrived to have conveyed to a nurse at a distance, and I have never since set eyes upon it. Free from danger, and enjoying a comfortable settlement, I now run after pleasure, night after night and day after day, without any hindrance whatever; am universally esteemed a woman of high spirit and independent soul, and my company is courted in every genteel party in the *ton*.

I had no dislike to my husband, Sir, that induced me to desert him. Oh! no, Sir; he was equal to most husbands in his character and behaviour. He spent his mornings in bed, his afternoons at Willis's, his evenings at a gaming-house, and his nights in a brothel. All this you know, Sir, was very tolerable—very tolerable indeed; it is the mode of the day; and, of course, there was no fault to be found with it. He was always polite to me, gave me money when I wanted it; never pestered me with his company at inconvenient times; and, above all, he never went out with me. Indeed, on the whole, he was what

I may call a good husband ; and if I had been inclined to satisfy myself with connubial happiness, I might have been pretty well contented. But, Sir, restraint was not to be borne. I married because it was convenient ; and when I had gained my end, and was no larger dunned by famishing tradesmen, I felt no inclination to lead a married life, and, once again, I obtained my sweet liberty.

I have a great many other points on which I intend to convey to you my opinions, but they would extend far beyond the limits of this letter, which I think I have already carried to a tolerable length. But, I see, Sir, that you have no objection to publish long letters, and as I suppose from that, that your readers do not dislike to read them, I shall indulge myself at all times in writing pretty copiously. A lady, you know, cannot curtail her sentiments so much as a gentleman : you must always allow her a greater degree of latitude ; for, believe me, Mr. Editor, if you offer to check the exuberances of her fancy you destroy any merit which belongs to it.

I have just received a card for the Marchioness of Hertford's concert this evening, and as the pink of the mode will assemble there out of compliment to the Prince Regent, I must not be absent. The Marchioness, by the bye, is a tolerable creature enough, and a woman of some spirit, which is more than I can say for her husband ; and I think she would display a still more desirable share of fashionable independence, if she were to part from her husband, and openly to live as the *chère amie* of her own *cher ami*.

Mr. Editor, I am no friend to scandal. There is nothing that so soon puts me out of temper as to hear persons making free with the characters of others, and endeavouring to destroy those reputations which have never before been impeached. But reputation, Sir, what is reputation ? It is nothing but the offspring of opinion ; it exists in the whim and caprice of the world ; and lives or dies as these vary ; it is a bubble that has only a momentary life, and he that takes most pains to keep it whole

will be the first to have it destroyed. This is my opinion; but I must leave off for the present, or I shall really transgress beyond forgiveness.

Your admirer,

LUCINDA LOVEJOY.

BLUE BEARD.

IF ever there was an age which deserved more particular credit than any other for its improvement in taste and the means of enjoyment, it must surely be this very identical generation. A theatre appropriated to the legitimate drama is no longer deemed insufficient for the growing appetite of the times—tragedy and comedy have lost that exquisite flavour they once possessed in the public estimation, and the *gust* of the day has taken a different turn, as if to put to the blush the plodding inclinations of old periods.

If the ghost of Shakespeare could ascend from the womb of earth, and behold his Hamlet succeeded by an equestrian exhibition, although death has extinguished the flame of his genius, the unsubstantial essence, urged by honest indignation, would shake its airy form in anger, and launch its bitterest curses on its tasteless posterity.

Mr. Kemble, it appears, has strongly and uniformly censured the introduction of this mummery upon the boards of Covent Garden. He justly considered that there was a dignity attached to the principal legitimate theatre of the kingdom, and that this dignity ought to be upheld by the most powerful combinations of human genius and industry. "Pity, indeed 'twas pity," that Mr. Kemble could not force a similar impression into the obstinate brain of his coadjutor, and greater pity still that there should be found *human* audiences, who can be brought to discountenance the laudable exertions of human performers, and to give a preference to the brute creation. It

is, however, easy to believe that where *horses* bear off the palm, *asses* must be the judges.

Those who solicit the indulgence of the public, are too apt to rise in their demands in proportion to the success they meet with. Pantomimes have been periodically allowed for the amusement of children in the holiday season, not from any conviction that they ought to be tolerated: and, presuming upon this concession, Mr. Harris has brought forward his present *morcean* of elegant taste, the public have swallowed the draught prepared, and while their relish continues, this dramatic quack will continue to deal out his potions until he shall have gorged them to satiety.

It is not intended to throw any discredit on the docility and flexibility of the horse; they are qualities which demand and receive a full share of qualified approbation, and there are amphitheatres designed solely for and well adapted to their display. But it is the impudent obtrusion of brutal instinct into those departments which are designed for the exercise of talent—it is the substitution of sagacity for genius, and the neglect of gifted performers for what may be literally termed a species of animal magnetism—it is, in short, the superseding of our best ancient and modern after-pieces, and the introduction of a spectacle which has no claim to originality, which affords no scope for talent, and yields to the rational mind no solid amusement, no recompence for the sacrifice of its time.

Surely the stock of dramatic genius in this country is not reduced to the low ebb to which we might reasonably conclude it is from this miserable expedient of Mr. Harris to keep alive popularity. If any thing like a fair chance were given to talent, surely some piece might have been brought forward, which without outraging the feelings and perverting the taste of the audience, might have filled the house to an overflow, as repeatedly as this equestrian romance. Or is it really and in truth the very barrenness of the dramatic soil which has compelled the colleague of Mr. Kemble to pirate *Astley's performances*,

and to allure *Astley's performers* to the THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN? Be it as it may, there is ample room for regret; and a blush must suffuse the cheek of every Englishman when he beholds the poverty of his country in intellect or in discernment.

It is unjust and illiberal conduct on the part of Mr. Harris to monopolize the public amusements. All kinds of monopoly are dangerous, and deserve severe reprehension, since their uniform tendency is to enrich one to the injury of many. The different departments of theatrical representation had hitherto been strictly observed—the legitimate drama occupied the stages of Covent Garden and Drury Lane—Astley's exhibited equestrian spectacles—and burlettas were presented at the Surry Theatre. But the line of distinction has been destroyed—the rights of the minor theatres have been infringed, and *they*, on a principle of self-defence, should be immediately allowed to introduce upon their boards regular tragedy and comedy.

How the performers at Covent Garden are pleased with their quadrupedal contemporaries it may easily be imagined. Like Mr. Kemble, they have remonstrated, but, like him, they have remonstrated in vain. Mortifying in the extreme must it be to the feelings of those who have deserved so well of the public, who have so long enjoyed the laurels they have won—veterans in talent and theatrical knowledge, to have been driven in a degree from their accustomed sphere of action, and to resign a share of the sock and the buskin to their new and successful competitors.

But public taste, like the tide of the ocean, has its ebbs and its flows; and they who dispute this position will, if they patiently observe, behold the present rage for equestrian performances gradually die away, and be succeeded by the resurrection of reason. The novelty of the spectacle has electrified the attention and suspended the discriminative powers of the community, but the effect will diminish as the cause weakens; and those who have been the foremost to applaud, may, probably, be amongst the first to censure the absurdity of the representation.

upon a stage where exertions of a superior nature are looked for.

The theatre ought to be a faithful mirror of the times, or a tablet on which are portrayed in living characters the manners of days of yore. Here folly and vice should be exposed to public ridicule, and the reformation of morals should be the leading object of genius. Can a display of brutal instinct reflect the character of the age, add to the general stock of knowledge, or promote the interests of morality? The folly of the times, instead of receiving correction, is augmented and encouraged by the fuel which is now nightly added to it; and blazes with such fierceness as to menace with destruction the little taste and discernment which yet remains untouched.

SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS, KNIGHT.

IF ever there was a fair subject of satirical biography, it is the personage whose memoirs we are about to communicate. He permits no occasion of appearing before the public to escape him; every newspaper is crowded with eulogies on his virtues; his own publications are filled with venal tributes to his excellence as a man, and his intrepidity as a patriot; in his conversation and deportment he is the very paragon of egotistic arrogance; and his epistolary correspondence contains the most striking and repeated evidence that he is not only the weakest man who ever walked the streets without a leader,* but the vainest coxcomb who ever insulted the good sense and defied the indignation of a British public.

The latter period of his life affords so many materials for moral and critical observation, that we must necessarily compress the history of his youth into a compass proportioned to its interest. His first appearance in the metropolis was in the capacity of errand-boy to one Babbs a bookseller of Oxford-street. After remaining about three

* Vide speech of the attorney-general, Carr *versus* Hood.

years in his service he ran away to his parents, who kept a small cottage in the county of Rutland, and who supported him as long as they could restrain certain unlucky propensities for which he has always been remarkable. After this he lived about two years as clerk to his uncle, a brewer in London; on being discarded from his service, he travelled to the neighbourhood of Chester, and meeting with a writer on astrology named Mensforth, whose circumstances were not much more prosperous than his own, they agreed in conjunction to open an academy, and accordingly distributed their cards informing the inhabitants that it would be opened on the 2d of January 1792, at the Black Dog, and that ladies and mathematics would be taught in a private apartment. Philip Richards (by which name he chose to be distinguished) was soon remarked to be of a very amorous constitution, and, if report speaks true, the *private apartment* was soon appropriated to its destined purpose. This "Academy" being neither more nor less than a day school, a great proportion of Messrs. M. and R.'s scholars were females, and the doctrines which the latter gentleman endeavoured to instil into their *infant* minds not meeting with the hearty approbation of their parents, the concern was ruined, and our hero either from the fear of bailiffs or of some other visitor equally unpleasant, was obliged to make a precipitate retreat.

His principal danger arose from the anger of an unfortunate carpenter, whose wife was supposed by her neighbours to have profited more than her husband wished or expected from Mr. Richards's instructions. Leicester appeared the only place to which he could safely fly from so many and such peculiar dangers; on his arrival there he received some trifling assistance from his family, and after earning a bare subsistence for more than two years by teaching the mysteries of the horn-book to a few young children, he insinuated himself into the good opinion of a family of the name of Gardener, and some presbyterian ho-siers at Leicester, who by raising a subscription, and holding themselves responsible for a few reams of foolscap pa-

per and a few dozen quack medicines he enabled him to commence the business of a petty stationer; the same friends, with the addition of Mr. Buxton, a banker, increased their subscription to assist him in establishing a newspaper, which was entitled the *Leicester Herald*.

His newspaper was distinguished by the extravagance of its jacobinical principles. In the rant of revolutionary fanaticism he far outstripped his rival journalists, and his paper was therefore rising into extensive circulation, when an unfortunate circumstance put a stop to his career. In the cause of revolution he was not personally inactive. On the market-days he employed much of his time in diffusing his principles among the farmers, to most of whom he was personally known, and sometimes he made excursions into the country villages for the purpose of vending inflammatory publications. He was detected in selling Paine's Rights of Man, and having been guilty of other indiscretions, he was convicted of sedition, and sentenced to an imprisonment of eighteen months in the gaol of Leicester.

Here he had leisure for reflection, but was not softened to repentance. On his liberation he continued with laudable perseverance to disseminate the principles to which he had been so lately "a martyr!" But by this time the people had returned to their senses; they no longer believed every man who railed against kings, and declaimed about equality, to be inspired. His newspaper would not sell, and his shop customers were gradually diminishing. At this juncture his premises, together with those of his neighbour, Mr. Billings, were destroyed by fire, and several advertisements, dated in November, 1795, appeared in the *Leicester Journal*, stating the loss of his accounts and papers, hinting that a subscription would not be unacceptable, and declaring his intention of recommencing business as soon as his premises could be rebuilt.

Some parts of his conduct, however, excited the suspicion of his fellow townsmen. Miss Harrison, who now resides at Leicester, asserts that about one o'clock on the

morning of the fire she saw him packing up his papers. By the *politer* inhabitants he was honoured with nicknames, and in the course of a few weeks his situation became so uncomfortable that he thought it necessary to leave to his father-in-law, Mr. Nixon, the task of settling his accounts, and to set out for the metropolis.

It is not among the least suspicious of the circumstances attending the fire, that the very books and papers of which in his advertisements he laments the loss, were conveyed on the morning on which the misfortune happened to the house of his opposite neighbour, Mr. Nutt's, a grocer, and have been repeatedly seen in his possession since his establishment in London,

He received from the Phoenix fire office £500, and would have been willing to receive a still further remuneration for his losses by subscription: but some parts of his conduct had excited in his former friends sentiments the very opposite to pity. When he found it prudent to fly from the indignation of his fellow townsmen, Messrs. Winter and Co. of Nottingham, gave him credit for a reasonable quantity of goods, and about the beginning of 1796, he commenced business as a hosier in St. Paul's church-yard.

His fame as a jacobin had preceded him, and at the house of his next door neighbour, Mr. Johnson, the bookseller, he was introduced to several literary characters, whose political opinions coincided with his own. At this time the Gentleman's Magazine was almost the only medium of miscellaneous communication among the literati; but its principles were hostile to republicanism, and the establishment of a literary journal on a similar plan, but guided by different views of policy and religion became an object of their most strenuous exertions. The literary activity and intrepidity of Mr. Phillips were well known; the writers of the party promised him their assistance; Mr. Johnson engaged to be his security for print and paper; and our hero was now distinguished in the double capacity of *hosier* and proprietor of the Monthly Magazine.

The success of this publication was deservedly considerable; and its profits enabled him to substitute books for stockings, and to load his shelves with furniture for the head instead of covering for the feet. It cannot be denied, however, that the circulation of his journal was promoted by artifices of a nature sufficiently equivocal. It was distinguished not only for the violence of its language, but by its apparent partiality to French principles and German literature. These recommendations procured it some degree of celebrity on the continent, and while every other English work was prohibited by the Directory, it alone was to be found in the coffee-houses of Paris. Mr. Phillips deserved at least the praise of indefatigable activity. By industry and perseverance he established its circulation among the country book clubs, and by a proper use of the means of puffing it afforded him, he opened the way for the circulation of those other works which have since rendered his manufactory so notorious, and the name of Richard Phillips was a passport to every book to which it was prefixed among the partizans of Priestley, and the disciples of the new philosophy.

The Magazine was conducted for many years under the direction of Dr. Aikin; but having some dispute on pecuniary matters, he withdrew his services, and announced by public advertisement that he had resigned the editorship. To this Mr. Phillips replied by a declaration, which he must have known to be untrue, that the Doctor *never had been* editor of the Monthly Magazine. The man who could make an assertion so notoriously false must have been equally regardless of veracity and destitute of shame.

In conjunction with Mr. Johnson he published an Annual Necrology, or biographical account of remarkable persons deceased in the year 1797. It is the common boast of Sir Richard Phillips that he has raised the value of literature more than two thirds, and that he has given more pecuniary encouragement to literary men than all the other booksellers put together. Whether his usual terms of remuneration were greater than ordinary; the subjoined state-

ment, with those that shall be inserted in the course of this article will sufficiently evince. If to employ the very worst authors who could be found in the circle of real or pretended literati be to promote the interests of literature, *that* praise cannot be denied him; if to expend twice the sum in bringing out a bad work, that would have sufficed for the publication of a good one, be a proof of judicious liberality, Mr. Phillips deserves the praise of intelligence and generosity. Nothing more contemptible in execution than this Annual Necrology can be conceived, yet for extracts from the Gentleman's Magazine, and compilations from the Annual Register, this prudent patron of literature was at an expence of £ 164. 8s. 9d.

	£.	s.	d.
To Alex. Stevens, Esq. <i>Editor</i> , besides 15 copies in boards	40	0	0
The same, for writing 448 pages, containing 20 lives, and 16 of index, and preface, making 29 sheets, viz. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ at 2 guineas, and 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ at 3 guineas	88	18	0
George Dyer, for the lives of Mason and Dr. Farmer, 46 pages, at three guineas per sheet	9	1	0
Robert Heron, for the life of James Bruce, Esq. at 63s.	3	13	0
John Lawrence, for the life of Bakewell, at 63s.	2	1	6
Mary Hays, for the life of Mary Woolstoncraft, at 63s.	9	9	0
Mr. Taylor of Norwich, for the life of Burger, at 63s.	2	0	0
Arthur Kershaw, for the life of Dupuis, at 52s. 6d.	1	18	6
—— Churchill for the life of Millman, at 52s. 6d.	0	10	0
—— Towers for the life of Dr. Kippis, at 52s. 6d.	1	16	3
Dr. Watkins for the life of Venn, at 52s. 6d.			
—— for the lives of Nienbuhr, Render, and Hertzberg, at 52s. 6d.	4	1	6
Life of Spallanzani	0	7	0
	164	8	9
Printing, paper, engraving and advertising, about	210	0	0
	374	8	9

This work not meeting with a success proportioned to the expence, it was suggested that the biography of living characters would be more acceptable to the public, and more profitable to the bookseller. But as it is of great importance in the history that we are about to give

of his literary speculations, to contrast his conduct with his professions, it will be necessary in this place to remind our readers, that he deposed on the trial, Carr *versus* Hood, 1st. that he never read books of a scurrilous nature, and that he considered all anonymous publications as libellous and scurrilous; and, 2dly, that he printed as many books as any man in London, but never published any *without the name of its author*. In the course of the following observations we have no doubt of our ability to prove that all these assertions (made upon oath) are gross and deliberate falsehoods.

The latter part of his first assertion, that he never read books of a scurrilous nature, and that he considered all anonymous publications as libellous and scurrilous, is downright nonsense; the *Whole Duty of Man* is an anonymous publication, but we never heard that it was libellous and scurrilous. That Sir Richard never reads anonymous publications may be true, but it is certain that he does not hesitate to publish them. In the circulation of scurrility he has been the most active of all the London booksellers. In an anonymous work published in Bridge-street, called the *Picture of London*, there is a long attack on the monthly critics, so gross in its language, and so libellous in its statements, that the impudence of the man who published it must have been at least equal to the folly of its author. The same article has been inserted in his *Guide to the Watering Places*. If we be not mistaken, Sir Richard while in St. Paul's Church-yard, was the publisher of an infamous production, intended as a *Biographical Dictionary of the Leaders of the French Revolution*. In his notices to correspondents, affixed to that anonymous publication the *Monthly Magazine*, he more than once distinguishes the *Edinburgh Reviewers* by the polite and liberal appellation of miscreants. In a work entitled "*Letters from an Irish Student*" to his father an Irish nobleman, which letters were compiled by one of his hackney writers, there is an account manufactured expressly at the desire of Sir Richard, of two reviewers

whom the author pretends to have observed "busy at their work" in the court-yard of Newgate! and, finally, this immaculate hater of anonymous criticism was the proprietor of the very worst anonymous review that ever obtained a temporary circulation.

His second assertion that he never published any books without the *name of the author*, is still more glaringly incorrect. He has not only published many hundred works (among which is the Annual Necrology) without the sanction of any name whatever, but on innumerable occasions he has issued his publications with the addition of names invented for the purpose. A book called Bible Stories, written by William Godwin, and calculated to degrade scriptures to the level of Tom Thumb, was published by Sir Richard, under the name of Scolfield; a Biographical Index to the House of Commons, to which the name of Joshua Wilson is prefixed, was written at the request of Sir Richard, by Alexander Stevens, the editor of the Annual Necrology, and author of three ponderous quartos, entitled "a History of the Wars that sprang out of the French Revolution." The publications obtruded on the public, under the name of the Rev. J. Goldsmith, A. M. are the productions of Jeremiah J——, the person who was tried in company with Hardy, Tooke, &c. for high treason; and the school books written and compiled by the Rev. David Blair, who dates his prefaces from Islington, are the joint productions of himself and Dr. Mavor.

But he is not merely guilty of publishing works under fictitious names, or without any name at all, and of dealing in scandalous and libellous publications: many of his publications are written for the express purpose of deception, and were undertaken by their authors under the express condition that truth should be sacrificed to convenience. We have now before us a little manual, entitled "Directions for the Choice of Books, by the Rev. Joshua Collins," which was written expressly for the purpose of puffing the knight's publications, and of which, for the greater security against suspicion, Mr. T. Reynolds was

the nominal publisher. All his publications are calculated to puff each other. Blair, alias Mavor, refers to the Arithmetic of Joyce, and Joyce alias Goldsmith, gives as a question to his pupils, what would be the expence of printing 100,756 copies, the number printed of Mavor's spelling books, at 7d. each copy. The ingenious student is desired to calculate the circumference of the earth, supposing that so many thousand sheets of Sir Richard's stock were laid side by side so as completely to circumscribe the globe. In the same ingenious way we are informed that 5000 of the Picture of London are sold annually, and that the paper in the warehouse at Bridge-street is sometimes worth more than thirty thousand pounds.

Next to the artifice of publishing a book under a fictitious name, is that of publishing it under the sanction of a person who had no business in the task of its compilation. Of this stratagem we have an instance in the case of a *Universal History* by Dr. Mavor. The history of *England*, only was written by the doctor, who compiled it with the aid of paste and scissars from a publication of Kearsleys; the remaining twenty-four volumes were written by a journeyman.

The authors whose works he published, and who were usually employed in his literary manufactory, were their own critics and biographers. They praised each other in the *Monthly Magazine*, and edited their own memoirs in the *Public Characters*. This last publication originated from the *Annual Necrology*, and the whole history of its publication is calculated to place the independence, the honesty, and the veracity of this paragon of conscientious booksellers in a very striking point of view. The subjoined table is in every respect a literary curiosity—it may enable the titled objects of adulation to reward the officiousness of their eulogists, and will give the general reader some notion of the quackery of publication,

PUBLIC CHARACTERS, 1799—1800.

	£.	s.	d.
Life of the Earl of St. Vincent, by Maxwell, for which he received	4	14	6
Mr. Sheridan, by Edward Quin	7	7	0
Rev. Dr. Parr			
Hon. T. Erskine, by C. March	5	0	0
Dr. Charles Hutton			
Lord Hawkesbury, by E. Quin	1	2	0
Dean Milner, by Cottle	2	7	0
Bishop of Meath, Dr. O'Beirne, by E. Quin	2	6	0
Rev. W. Farish, by Cottle	1	15	0
Sir Francis Bourgeois, by E. Quin	0	16	0
Duke of Richmond, by Oldfield	1	8	0
Mrs. Abington, by E. Quin	0	17	0
Mr. Saurin, by Wallace	1	11	6
Dr. Samuel Arnold, by Dr. Busby	2	0	0
Lord Bridport			
Marquis of Lansdowne, &c. by Oldfield	3	3	0
Sir John Parnell, by Adams	0	12	0
Mr. Southey, by George Dyer	1	15	0
Dr. Duigenan, by Wallace	0	18	0
Mr. George Ponsonby, by Adams	1	8	0
Mr. Granville Thorpe, by Cottle and Oldfield	3	6	0
Mr. Pelham, by Oldfield	0	9	0
Duke of Grafton, by Oldfield	2	0	0
Secretary Cooke, by Wallace and Adams	1	10	0
Major Cartwright, by himself			
Duke of Leinster, by Adams	1	11	6
Mrs. Inchbald, by George Dyer	2	2	0
Earl Fitzwilliam, by Adams	3	0	0
William Godwin, by John Fenwick	5	5	0
Rev. Mr. Greaves, by S. J. Pratt	3	3	0
Mr. Shield, by Dr. Busby	1	10	0
Sir George Yonge, by John Feltham	1	2	0
Dr. Garnett, by himself			
Lords Dillon and Castlereagh, by Wallace	1	5	0
Dr. Adam Ferguson, by Dr. Bisset	4	14	6
Mr William Hayley, by Ed. Quin	2	0	0
Countess of Derby, by Dr. Watkins	1	11	6
Mr. Pratt, by himself			
Dr. Harrington, by Mr. Pratt	2	10	
Duchess of Gordon, by Dr. Bisset	2	15	0
Dr Currie			

Miss Linwood, by John Ireland	2	2	0
Mr. W. Cowper, by C. Marsh	1	11	6
Lord Kenyon, by C. March	1	12	0
Mr. Hastings, by John Fenwick	2	2	0
Duke of Bedford, by B. Price and J. Fenwick	2	2	0

The volume for 1801 was edited by Mr. Pratt, for which he received £34 2s. 6d. at the rate of one guinea per sheet. Besides this sum he was paid twelve guineas for writing the lives of Mrs. Robinson, Dr. Lettson, Mr. Colman, and the Duke of Marlborough.

The fourth and succeeding volumes were edited by Alexander Stevens, alias Joshua Wilson, of Park Cottage, Chelsea, Esq. He wrote *all* the fourth volume except six lives. Among the other curiosities of literature let it be commemorated that the life of Robert Ker Porter was written by Mrs. Robinson, and that of Dr. HUGH BLAIR, by Mr. Tegg, of the *Apollo library, Cheapside!* The accounts of John Ireland and John Almon were written *by themselves*.

Such are the proofs of that honest hatred of deception; of that magnanimous dislike of anonymous publications, and that utter detestation of bookmaking artifices, which he so decorously and so fortunately expressed in his famous appearance as a witness. Now his horror at the very idea of anonymous scurrility, even supposing his professions to have been true, could proceed only from his love of virtue. Let us relate an anecdote therefore which may place his character as a husband and a christian in the point of view in which it ought to be exhibited. He had about once a year a party to what he is pleased to call a literary dinner. The constant visitors on these occasions were Mr. Pratt, Peter Pindar, Rev. Dr. Mavor, the late Dr. G, and Mr. R. of Drury-lane theatre. As soon as the ladies have retired, Sir Richard hands from a drawer that delectable specimen of virtuous composition, Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*; the original manuscript of which he purchased for thirty pounds, on purpose to gratify his private friends with the sight of such a rare curiosity

From this manuscript he reads two or three chapters by way of raising the spirits of his company, who do not fail in the course of the evening to illustrate what they have heard, and to embellish the subject by their convivial commentaries. That a licentious poet, and profane actor, should be present at these orgies is more lamentable than surprizing, but that such entertainments should be given by the moral and magnanimous bookseller of Blackfriars, or attended by the *Bard of Virtue*, the champion of philanthropy, the man "dear to virtue and the muses," is nearly so astonishing as to surpass belief, and so detestable as to deserve the warmest expression of public indignation.

While engaged in the pursuit of literary speculation, he was not insensible to the charms of beauty, or the impressions of love. His amatory propensities however appear to have been in some degree subservient to more grovelling appetites. He married his present lady not because she was amiable and lovely, but because she excelled in the art of making a *fruit pie*. Between his first arrival in London from Leicester, and his establishment in St. Paul's church-yard, he boarded at the house of a milliner, in Maiden-lane, Covent-garden. Great was the difficulty his hostess found in the choice of dishes to suit his taste, without shocking his antipathies. He is a professed disciple of Pythagoras, and rivals Mr. Pratt in his tenderness to brutes. To eat animal food is with him the *ne plus ultra* of abomination; and Mrs. F. having one day placed on the table a very tempting apple-pie, Sir Richard was struck with ineffable horror on discovering, as he was about to taste it, that it was made with *suet*! and having finished his dinner of eggs and porter, delivered an animated harangue on the subject of carnivorism. The next day another pie adorned the bottom of the table, the crust of which he was assured by his hostess was raised with butter. Mr. Phillips eat, and found that it was good. After the cloth was drawn, Mrs. F. informed him that his thanks were due to Miss Griffiths, one of her

young ladies, who overhearing him express his indignation on the preceding day, had employed the morning in making the pie that he had just tasted. Our hero was enchanted; gratitude ripened into love, and in a few weeks the happy couple were joined together in the holy bonds of matrimony.

The continual appearance of his name in the newspapers, the repeated mention of his talents and his virtues in the publications ushered into the world under his immediate auspices, and the other modes of direct and collateral puffing to which he had recourse, had given him a kind of delusive notoriety of which any man less willing to purchase distinction at any price would have been ashamed. In the year 1807, the shrievalty of London and Middlesex was refused by many respectable persons on whom the office had devolved, and Mr. Smith might have been compelled to sustain the burthen of his duty unassisted by a colleague, had not Mr. Phillips magnanimously volunteered his services. That the orange-coloured livery, and the golden chain were the great temptations that induced him to sacrifice his time and fortune to the service of his fellow citizens, cannot be disputed. So conscious was he during the whole period of his shrievalty of the dignity of his office, that he could not write a confidential note, or an invitation to dinner, without affixing to his name the cognomen of sheriff. We have in our possession more than a dozen notes to the following purport: "Mr. *Sheriff* Phillips presents his compliments, will be glad to see Mr. and Mrs. H. to cards and a sandwich this evening."—"Mr. *Sheriff* Phillips will thank Mr. G. to send his servant for the books as soon as possible."—"Mr. *Sheriff* Phillips requests that two pounds of moist sugar, and half a pound of coffee may be sent to No. 6, Bridge-street directly," &c. &c. That he has effected the correction of many abuses in the prisons, and in lock-up houses, we readily admit: but we could have wished that his philanthropy had not always been so obtrusively ostentatious. In the execution of his duty he too often

mistook insolence for intrepidity, and pursued a laudable object, not because it was right, but because its accomplishment would afford him full scope for display. In his *Picture of London*, in the *Letters of an Irish Student*, and in other publications, he has been careful to emblazon his own virtues, and to commemorate his own exploits during his year of office. The motives of a man can only be estimated from our knowledge of his general character; in the intercourse of common life Sir Richard is known to be vain, garrulous, and ostentatious; his conduct to those whom friendship as well as interest should have prevented him from injuring or deceiving, has usually been the very opposite to that of the man of feeling or generosity; and if religion be the test of rectitude, the following note will afford the reader some faint idea, not only of his general regard for decorum, but of his claims to the character of a devotee:

DEAR SIR,

"T—— has been here, and has treated me most insolently. The getting back my money is out of the question. My indignation of yesterday is returned, and *by the living G*— I will presently come to the governor if the money is not replaced on my account—such trifling—such villainy, is not to be borne with.

"The money—the £246—nothing but it will satisfy me.

"I will have it—by G—I will have it.

"R. P."

Even the feasts that he was obliged to give by virtue of his office were detailed to the world with all the minuteness of which such subjects are susceptible. That the people might admire the liberality of the knightly bookseller, he distributed with great industry a calculation of his expenses, by which those who felt any interest in the subject might know how many dozen of wine were drank at his cost, and what he paid for his horses and his liveries. It is to the credit of our citizens that he is the only example of similar pomposity; and his colleagues sufficiently testified their reprehension of his conduct, and character as sheriff by declining to accept his invitations.

Having occasion in his official capacity to present an address to the king, he obtained the object of his long and anxious desires, the dignity of knighthood. It should be remembered that at his outset he was one of the most strenuous advocates of equality; that he was confined in Leicester gaol for selling Paine's Rights of Man, &c.; that his essays in the Monthly Magazine under the signature of Common Sense, contain many acrimonious criticisms on city dignity, and that his usual conversation previous to the year 1807 was filled with sarcasms against Sir John Eamer, and other "mushrooms of civic knighthood." Something however may be allowed to the weakness of conjugal affection. Mrs. Phillips was anxious to become a lady, and conceiving that a knight of one thing, was equal to a knight of another, she procured a miniature painter who gave a full length picture of Sir Richard adorned with the insignia of the *garter*.

Between the close of his year of office and the enquiry into the conduct of the Commander in Chief, his time was chiefly employed in the manufacture of bills and the preparation of his book on the Office of Sheriff. He is always on the look out, however, for opportunities of obtruding himself on the public notice. During the period of the investigation into the conduct of the Duke of York, he was indefatigable in his attentions to Mrs. Clarke, with whom he formed an accidental connexion at Hampstead, and repeatedly boasted to more than one of his private friends, that he was her favored confident. That lady however was not prepossessed in his favor by any observations he was able to make on his character or manners. She treated him with a coldness that only excited his eagerness for a different reception, and kept him alive to every circumstance that could promote his object. It would be equally tedious and unprofitable to detail the variety of modes in which, during the whole of the investigation, and for some time before the suppression of Mrs. Clarke's books he contrived to make himself ridiculous. It being pretty generally circulated, however, that he possessed some influence over the mind of that lady, Lord

Moira commissioned one Mr. G. a personage of some celebrity in the fashionable world, and well calculated to conduct such a negociation to call upon Sir Richard, and request him to employ his interest in its suppression*. On Mr. G.'s introduction to the knight, the latter professed the most perfect acquaintance with Mrs. Clarke's views and expectations, pretended to treat, as from her, on the topic of suppression, and mentioned a specific sum which she was willing to accept. At the next interview he discovered that the sum mentioned was too little, and expressed in forcible terms the necessity of enhancing it. During all this time *the negociation was totally unknown to Mrs. Clarke, and he had received from her no authority whatever to agree to any terms on her account.* This Mr. G. began to suspect, and he therefore returned to Lord Moira, and detailed the conversation. Phillips in the mean time anxious to cut a principal figure in the transaction, dogged Mr. G. to his lordship's house, and that gentleman who had agreed to meet the knight, next morning at the shop of *Tabart* the bookseller, suspecting from his not keeping the appointment that he was engaged in some dishonorable plan, made the best of his way to Lord Moira's house, and met Sir Richard *at the door.* The latter informed him that *he* was commissioned to treat with Mrs. Clarke; G. upbraided him with the meanness of his conduct, informed him that he knew his assertion to be false, and insisted *if* he was resolved to visit Mrs. C. on accompanying him; together therefore they went, and the suspicions of Mr. G. were confirmed. The lady, over whom *he had so much influence, and in whose name he had pretended to negotiate,* was totally unacquainted with the subject of their visit, and treated the knight with as much coldness as was consistent with civility. Sir Richard, however, was not restrained in his address or conversation by any scruples of delicacy. On mentioning the price offered for suppression he observed (looking round the room) that — thousand pounds

* Mr. G. has, for some reason best known to himself, concealed many circumstances of this affair, in the account published by him.

would be a very *comfortable thing*, in addition to her *other means* of subsistence ; bless me (he continued) this is very handsome furniture ; why all this is very different from what you were once accustomed to— your calling seems to be a profitable one,— pray what may be your terms ?— A hundred guineas I suppose for a night's lodging, and fifty for a single embrace.—I suppose, by the bye, that when *I offer myself* you'll take twenty-five!!!" Mrs. Clarke was shocked, and his companion was indignant. It was necessary, however, that a being so vain and so talkative should be treated with some degree of address. Sir Richard came away, well satisfied with so prosperous a beginning, and Mr. Gilliland returned to Mrs. C. by appointment, at night, and concluded the negotiation.

It is not quite irrelevant to the subject to relate, that as soon as the negotiation was finished, and the result communicated to the *fides Achites* of Sir Richard, Mr. Gillett, the latter conscientious gentleman immediately set nine additional presses at work, for the purpose of making a bill, which was *run up* between the morning of the day of combustion and the morning preceding, from five to *thirteen* hundred pounds.

During his year of shrievalty he was too much occupied with his carriage, his liveries, and his entertainments to attend to his business. His accounts became confused ; by his insolence he had offended many of his country customers, his stock remained on hand, and money began to be deficient. He had recourse therefore to the system of accommodation bills ; and a late trial between him and his bankers illustrates pretty clearly the mode in which some of these transactions were conducted. It appeared on evidence that several bills drawn by a Mr. O'Sullivan, and dated from Cork, were in fact drawn in Bridge-street ; Sir Richard defended the action on the grounds of this *informality*, and of their being drawn upon a wrong stamp, and the judge took an opportunity of observing in his address to the jury, that although the plaintiffs must be nonsuited, *the parties might be indicted for a conspiracy to defraud.*

After the determination of this action his credit gradually declined, and the fire at Mr. Gillett's printing-office was attended by circumstances that considerably weakened the confidence even of his friends in the spotless integrity of which he so frequently boasts. His bankruptcy, which can only be ascribed to the most incorrigible folly, has been productive of extensive and lasting injury to the majority of those connected with the press. Mr. Kearsley and many other booksellers, to whom the delay of payment is equivalent to a *bona fide* loss, have reason to lament their injudicious confidence in his promises and professions. If any thing could add to the irritation of his creditors it would be the insolence with which, even under the present circumstances, he boasts of his wealth, and proclaims his services to the bookselling connection. In his situation silence only can preserve him from the shame of further exposure; and we would recommend him to beware how he again reminds the readers of the Morning Post, or any other newspaper of his experiments on fire.

THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS,

SIR,

I AM happy to find from the tenor of your political observations, that we are likely to have *one* publication at least which shall be conducted on principles of *discriminative* patriotism: which does not support every measure as judicious, nor every argument as cogent that is adopted by one particular party; which supposes that Sir Francis Burdett may possibly be influenced by the noblest feelings, though the warrant by which he was committed to the Tower may be legal; and that the liberty of the press has been endangered by the indiscretion of the attorney-general, though Mr. Finnerty's letter to

Lord Castlereagh was a gross and malicious libel. If there be any one of your readers who wishes that you should support one political party on every occasion, and under every circumstance, that individual must bear to be accused of wishing to be confirmed in prejudice rather than enlightened by truth.

How little dependence can be placed on the daily or monthly political journalists, can only be fully determined by those who have the patience to compare them with themselves and with each other. A short sketch of the sentiments inculcated, and a description of the language employed by the different newspapers may perhaps enable you to judge in what the excellence of political writing consists, and by what principles of action their editors are directed. My observations on the weekly and monthly journals, must be postponed to a more favourable opportunity.

The Post is the only morning newspaper which is confessedly conducted under the immediate direction of the ministry. With Mr. Byrne every man who does not detest the "vile Cobbett," is an *iron-hearted* monster; and he who does not immediately allow that Bonaparte is guilty of every crime that Mr. Goldsmith chuses to impute to him, *must be* a traitor to his country, the friend of our "direful foe," "one of the horrible scum of jacobinism," and a "disciple of Horne Tooke." The reader of the Morning Post will be surprised to discover that the Emperor Alexander is a sage, or an idiot, a virtuous monarch, or an execrable tyrant, in proportion as his sentiments are favourable or unfavourable to this country. The speeches of the opposition are garbled by Mr. Byrne's reporters without mercy or discretion. Mr. Whitbread always speaks in its columns like a bully, and Sir Francis like a lunatic. But it is in the accounts of the meetings in Palace Yard, or of the courts of Common Council, that the inventive powers of his assistants, and the critical acuteness of Mr. B.'s scissars are more peculiarly evident. Mr. Walker is made to talk in the lan-

guage of a buffoon, and every part of Mr. Waithman's speech is usually inserted but that which contains the substance of his argument. An epigram occasionally appears in the columns of this paper, wittily informing us that "the man who's born to be hung, can never drown," and that Mr. *Wardle* does but *ward-ill* the attacks of his enemies. The sum and substance of the bullion report are discussed every morning in pithy letters of twelve lines each—the leading article always talks of "*heart-felt joy*" on the part of the editor; and "gnashing anguish" on that of the Gallic tyrant.

The *Morning Chronicle*, on the contrary, is filled with lamentations on the improvidence of ministers. If their measures be unfortunate, "what else could be expected?" if successful, they are "indebted to accidental causes." Mr. Perry cannot announce the capture of an island in the West Indies, without damping our joy by the reflection that such events if "the high and noble personages," his friends, were in power, "would be much more frequent!" If troops be not sent to a certain station "such is the supineness and inactivity of the precious ministers to whom the guidance of our affairs is committed;" if troops *be* sent out, "such is the improvident exhaustion of our resources on enterprizes doubtful in their result, and in which, if they be successful, we have no concern!" When Lords Grey and Grenville are about to return to power they "cannot but congratulate their country on the prospect before them." When the regent deems it expedient to retain the present ministers in office, "every one must admire the motives which influenced his royal highness to come to a determination at which the noble personages interested cannot themselves but rejoice." Good news with the *Morning Chronicle* is always "doubtful;" but bad news is generally "they fear but too correct." Lord Wellington's dispatches contain "exaggerations;" but the *Moniteurs* "convey to an unprejudiced mind testimony too melancholy of the real state of the war in the peninsula." At a time when the country is

almost universally exulting in the prowess of its troops, and the successful issue of its policy, they crowd their pages with petty paragraphs comparing the ministry to feather-beds, and the British soldiery to chaff!

The only journal immediately under the influence of the Burdettites is the *Statesman*. Under the direction of the present editor of the *Alfred* it obtained a celebrity rather profitable than honourable to its proprietors. At that time, indeed, it was written with some degree of political energy and literary correctness; the only department of it which was conducted without talent, was that to which it owed the increase of its circulation. The history of the *O. P. row* was only remarkable for vulgar ribaldry and persevering falsehood. Since the secession of Mr. Willett, however, the *Statesman* has been solely distinguished for the scurrility of its language and the incorrectness of its grammar. The productions of Mr. Lovell are the most perfect specimens of bad writing that have ever been obtruded on the notice of the public. With him all public men are corrupt, every minister is an idiot, and every opponent of Burdettism a wretched driveller. To rejoice at the success of his country's arms is contrary to every principle and repugnant to every feeling of the editor of the *Statesman*. When he hears of a victory in Portugal, he is "reminded of the burthen of taxes that must be imposed in consequence;" if an expedition be successful "of what ultimate advantage will be its result;" if no expedition be sent out "who can think of the inactivity of ministers without execration?" The old-fashioned notions of attachment to our king and country, are boldly exploded by this enlightened journalist. When the possibility of invasion occurs to his mind, he does not feel any emotion of involuntary patriotism, but stop to calculate the balance of profit or loss that would remain after both the possible issues of the contest. It is a fixed principle with Mr. L. to believe the *Moniteur* in preference to the *London Gazette*; to doubt whatever intelligence is favourable to

England, and to believe whatever is propitious to her enemy. If a great public question be agitated, it is not his duty to examine it; it is sufficient for him that in one point of view the answer is satisfactory, and in the other calculated to induce despondency. Mr. Lovell always adopts the latter. His modesty is not less remarkable than his candor. About once a week ten columns are filled with accounts of his private correspondence, and with ungrammatical eulogies on his own virtues and abilities. He believes himself to be the champion of the press; is *quite certain* that England is the worst of all possible countries; *cannot doubt* that every ministry must be imbecile and corrupt; is *firmly convinced* that Colonel Wardle is the most virtuous of men, and the most immaculate of patriots; and will assert while life remains that Mr. Perceval is a most weak and corrupt and profligate placeman.

It is almost peculiar to this paper that it never attempts even the appearance of argument. Even the Morning Post condescends to notice the remarks of its opponents, and the Chronicle has recourse to sophistry rather than to silence. But the leading articles of the Statesman are distinguished only by assertion. Let a circumstance that its editors have once asserted be denied by the most powerful evidence, they scorn to confess that they were inaccurate; let an opinion that they have once adopted be refuted by the intelligence of the next morning, their opinion remains the same, and is probably repeated in terms of more hardened confidence. If they assert that the king is worse, and the bulletins of the day announce him to be better, still their *assertion was correct*; if Mr. Perceval express his confident expectation of pleasing intelligence from Portugal, and is therefore distinguished by the title of "a petty politician," and the news from the peninsula does actually turn out to be in the highest degree glorious to the English arms, still, "the foresight of the lawyer-like chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster is known to every one!"

Such, Sir, are the candor, the independence, and the decency of the popular journals more immediately under the influence of the ministers, the opposition, and the Burdettites. If the present communication be admitted, my next month's leisure shall be devoted to an examination of the principles and character of the *Day*, the *Times*, the *Herald*, and the *Courier*.

TUTTΩ.

THE HYPERCRITIC.

No. II.

THE general reader who finds himself assailed on every side by the obtrusion of reviewers, and who observes the extent of their influence on the literary opinions of the educated multitude; would scarcely suppose that before the year 1749, scarcely any critical journal had appeared, either designed or calculated for circulation among any but the professed votaries of literature. The *History of the Republic of Letters* was written with considerable ability; but the subjects it discussed were either purely classical or strictly philosophical; and as the respective articles appeared in the form of regular dissertation, and the productions analyzed were chosen on a principle of selection more strict than that by which the *Edinburgh Review* professes to be distinguished, it was better adapted to gratify the learned than to diffuse a knowledge of literature among the middle classes of society. After being continued therefore from the year 1727 to 1733, it was dropped for want of encouragement, and public taste was left to the direction of its own bias. Even at this period the principles of literary freedom were so imperfectly understood, that the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, on being requested by a correspondent to give some opinion of the books men-

tioned in his monthly catalogue, expresses his doubts *whether to do this would not be unjust to the publishers of the respective works.* As publications multiplied, however, the necessity of a guide to their selection became more obvious; and in 1749, Mr. Griffiths established the *Monthly Review*, which was at first conducted on a plan not very dissimilar to that of the *Edinburgh Review*, but afterwards extended in its utility by the addition of brief notices under the title of a monthly catalogue.

From the year 1749 to 1785, this review sustained a character and possessed an authority to which none of its rivals or contemporaries could aspire, and which nothing could have established but the united co-operation of its fortune and its merits. We doubt whether the volumes of the *Edinburgh Review* are more entertaining and instructive than those of the early series of the *Monthly*. At once learned, spirited, and independent, playful and authoritative, the ability of their remarks could seldom be denied, or the justice of their decisions be disputed. But since the end of the year 1795, the criticisms of this journal have been more remarkable for their impartiality than their ingenuity or their vigour. From the *Monthly Review*, as it is at present conducted, the general reader may obtain a just idea of the book in question; but the man of taste is seldom delighted by their literary talents, the scholar instructed by the profundity of their research, or the speculatist enlightened by the novelty or ingenuity of their reasoning.

The success of the *Monthly Review* excited another bookseller to establish a rival journal under the direction of Dr. Smollet. The circumstances attending the appearance of the first number of the *Critical Review* were rather inauspicious. It was too evident that the reviewers had forgotten to read the works they criticised, and one of their principal extracts was the description of a light-house, with *literal* references to a plate in the original publication. Dr. Smollet was a man of general information, but was not remarkable for the correctness

of his knowledge, or the profundity of his research. Engaged in a multiplicity of undertakings, his criticisms were usually written in haste, and published without revision; his temper was irritable, and he was generally acrimonious, and frequently unjust. Since that period, notwithstanding the greatest writers of the last century were occasional contributors to its pages, the general character of the *Critical Review* has been below mediocrity; and from the time of Churchill to Gifford, it was more remarkable for virulence than justice. The reply of the latter gentleman to the criticism on his *Juvenal*, gave a fatal blow to its declining reputation. A new series was begun under the direction of a Mr. Hunt, we believe of Trinity College, Cambridge; but this gentleman was too much occupied in his excursions to Bath and Harrowgate to devote the requisite attention to his duty as an editor. It is now conducted by Mr. Fellowes, a Unitarian clergyman of the church of England, who writes, with the exception of a few medical articles by Dr. Lambe, the whole of the review. In style and language he is an humble imitator of the Edinburgh reviewers; as a critic his religious sentiments are diametrically opposite to those in which he has sworn his belief, and though he is not destitute of theological learning, yet the ruggedness of his diction, the pedantic singularity of his literary opinions, and his total deficiency in taste, elegance, and vivacity, render the task of labouring through his criticisms equally fatiguing and unprofitable.

Soon after the appearance of the *Critical Review*, the editors of the magazines extended their plan to a cursory notice of remarkable publications: but though the best criticisms of Dr. Johnson were written for a monthly miscellany, the greater number of such sketches are rather interesting as exhibiting the progress of public information, than as throwing any additional light on the regions of literature. If we may judge from the specimens of criticism that occur in the periodical publications between 1760 and 1783, the spirit of public curiosity during

that interval must have been insatiable. Gibbon's History of the Roman Empire is dismissed in some of these apologies for criticism, with a simple assurance that it "deserves commendation;" and Goldsmith's Deserted Village is declared in the British Magazine to be "elegant and pathetic." It is not our intention to give a history of all the miscellanies (amounting in the course of forty years to about 140), of which the review was a secondary department; the European and the Gentleman's Magazines are the only survivors amidst the numbers that have perished: the criticisms of the former were executed with great ability till the year 1793, but since that period have been remarkable only for their want of spirit, elegance, and justice: the review department of the latter is only distinguished by an occasional display of classical research and by the orthodox consistency of its religious and political opinions.

It would be useless to enumerate the titles of the literary journals that have occasionally appeared from the establishment of the Critical Review to the present time. Maty's review was occasionally learned, but always dull; Kenrick's London Review might more properly have been entitled a "Monthly Vehicle of Abuse against George Colman and David Garrick." The London Review, published by Johnson in 1796, and edited by Mrs. Wolstoncraft; the Analytical Review, devoted solely to the support of Jacobinical and Unitarian principles; the General Review, which was little better than a monthly catalogue; the Weekly Review, of which the chief feature was its "Comparative Criticism," or "Review & Review," the Imperial Review, a work conducted with great ability; the Oxford Review, written by the dependents of Sir Richard Phillips, resident in London; and the Literary Journal, remarkable only for its utter contempt of truth and the inelegance of its language; are at present to be found only at the book-stalls. The Antijacobin Review was established and conducted under happier auspices; at its outset its articles were equally distin-

guished for their spirit and their elegance, and even at present, whatever may be thought of its political opinions, it deserves to be regarded as the most instructive and entertaining of the literary journals.

The *British Critic* was established by the high church party, and distinguished at its outset for an occasional display of classical learning. At present it is only read by a few clergymen of the old school, is totally destitute of elegance and spirit, and is conducted with a carelessness, equally disgraceful to its editor and injurious to its reputation, even among those of its subscribers who forgive its dulness in consideration of its orthodoxy.

Though we are the decided enemies of methodism, we are not so bigotted as to deny the literary and scholastic merit of its most prominent advocates, merely because we disapprove of their principles. The *Eclectic Review* is conducted with great attention and ability; its general criticisms are usually spirited and ingenious; it displays a considerable portion of classical knowledge, and is remarkable for the energy of its style and the correctness of its moral sentiments. That on religious topics it should be always vehement, and occasionally unjust, is the natural result of its attachment to those principles on which it was professedly established.

On the character of the *Edinburgh Review*, and on the causes of Mr. Cumberland's failure we have already stated our sentiments at considerable length; but a tale has been related of Mr. Gifford's conduct towards the author of *Calvary* which the former gentleman will feel it due to his own reputation that he should refute. When the *London Review* was first projected, Mr. Cumberland applied to Mr. Gifford for his friendly cooperation, and the translator of *Juvenal* promised him a review of *Marmion*. On being applied to from time to time for the expected article, Mr. Gifford expressed his sorrow for the delay, but always repeated his intention to perform his promise. After all the other arrangements, however, had been completed, and the press was waiting only for Mr. Gifford's critique

it came by mere accident to the knowledge of Mr. Cumberland, that his friend and expected coadjutor had been employed for a considerable time in preparing the first number of a rival review, and that his promise of assistance had been repeated for no other purpose than to delay the completion of Mr. Cumberland's arrangements, and thus to gain the start in the race of publication.

The Hypercritic thought it necessary to advance these preliminary observations at the outset of his progress, in order to convince the readers of the *SCOURGE* that neither his praise nor his censure of the articles on which it may be his future duty to remark, are influenced by any motive inconsistent with the most impartial execution of his office. It will be his endeavour, as he proceeds, to compare the opinions of contending critics on many subjects of great importance to the interests of learning and morality; and he hopes that if he shall not be deemed worthy of that praise which is of all others the most gratifying to an author, the praise of literary excellence, he may not be denied the secondary virtue of critical impartiality.

E.

PROVINCIAL CLERGY.

SIR,

From the general tenor of your writings, I am persuaded to hope that you are not unfriendly to the national church, and that you are willing to insert any observations that have a tendency to promote its stability, or exalt its dignity. These purposes can never be accomplished by indiscriminate eulogy, or servile acquiescence in the opinion of those who consider freedom of opinion in the light of heresy, and believe that every man who can discover that the conduct of a clergyman may be improper, while the doctrines that he preaches are true, to be an infidel. The true friends to the establishment are those who enable the public to distinguish the real from the pretended minis-

ters of religion, who endeavours to exalt the dignity of the respectable clergy by the detection and exposure of the men who disgrace the profession by their indolence or their vices. Were all the fools and profligates who at present perform the service of the church deprived of those emoluments of which the collection is the only duty they perform with any degree of activity or zeal, the learned and pious ministers of Christ might succeed to those rewards, which their virtues and their modesty alone debar them from soliciting or possessing.

You have, doubtless, been astonished that the clergy of the county of Nottingham should have been introduced so conspicuously to public notice in certain publications contemporary with the *Scourge*; but you are probably unaware that in this little place, there are no fewer than "four and twenty *parsons* all in a row," and out of such a number it will inevitably happen that a few will be found who do not enforce their precepts by their example. To play at cribbage, and drink ale, and swear, and talk bawdry, and ogle the servants at the ale house, are the favorite amusements of more than one of these preachers of christianity. Among others the vicar, Mr. H. is remarkable, not indeed for the pursuits that I have already mentioned, but for certain eccentricities of which I am about to give you an example. I need not assure you, Sir, that when all these personages are collected together in this place (which heaven be praised! is not very often) the town is in an uproar. All our tradesmen are "jolly," and all our inn-keepers six-feet higher than during the vacation.

Engaged in pursuits too multifarious to admit of specification, it is more surprising that some of them should be able to do any duty at all than that they should not always be punctual in their attendance when their official appearance is required, or remiss or indecorous in performing the ceremonies of the church of which they are the ministers. Mr. H. in particular is too good a whist player, and too great a favourite of the ladies, to neglect

either the one or the other for the *hum-drum* functions that his parishioners call upon him to exercise. As a noble example of his "happy extravagance" permit me to state the following authentic anecdote. A poor woman of this place having a child under her care which was dangerously ill, sent an humble request to Mr. H. that he would come and perform the ceremony of baptism. No answer being returned, a second petition was sent which sustained the same reception with the first ; but still the worthy V. of S. remained *serenely silent*. With equal success *four* other messages were sent to him ; but on the transmission of a seventh, he thought proper to make his appearance. In the mean time however the infant had died ; and on his arrival, being informed of the circumstance, he exclaimed "never mind! never mind! let me see the child!" He was therefore conducted to the body: and laying his hand said "It's warm ; oh it will do!" The rites were accordingly performed, and the reverend gentleman after hurrying over the ceremony with convenient speed, returned to the card-table.

M. L.

Nottinghamshire,
April 20th, 1810.

THE PULPIT, No. II.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

Sermon preached by the Rev. T. Ravenhill, at the church of Lower Tooting, Surry.—Text : Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Romans, Chap. 5. verse 1.*

THE doctrine of justification by faith is in itself so abstruse, and involves in its discussion so many of the most difficult questions that have divided the christian church, that the minister who selects it as the subject of

his discourse, should be well convinced of his own ability to "explain the doubtful and enforce the true." Such topics unless they be treated with a degree of talent proportioned to their difficulty and importance should be left unscrutinized: an injudicious effort to explain them will only have a tendency to excite enquiries that it will not satisfy, and he who has once doubted the atonement, will feel his confidence rather diminished than confirmed, by the superficial remarks or indecorous declamations of a man, who has no other qualification for the pulpit than the necessary sanction of the bishop.

When we speak of indecorous declamation we allude to the fashionable cant of our fashionable preachers whenever they have occasion to notice the dogmas or the advocates of heterodoxy. Instead of entering into a dispassionate refutation of the arguments of their opponents (the only mode by which they can benefit the cause of genuine christianity,) they assault them with the violence of abuse, or the ironical affectation of pity for their ignorance and insanity. It unfortunately happens that these are modes of attack in which the champions of heresy are not less skilful than themselves. It seems to have been forgotten by those clergymen who are the most celebrated for this species of warfare, that if declamation be received as a substitute for argument, the church of Rome can claim undisputed precedency over every other establishment: that the followers of Mahomet are not less expert in the application of terms of abuse than the most orthodox declaimers of our own country, and that though an appeal to the passions or prejudices of their hearers may accord with the feelings, and confirm the faith of those who are already the zealous friends of the establishment, it can only irritate the votaries of heresy, without the probability of converting them. To meet our enemies on the broad basis of legitimate reasoning, is the only mode of warfare consistent with the interests or worthy the dignity of the christian church. The triumph of dogmatism can be but momentary. If we have the right side of the ques-

tion, its discussion will add to the stability of our power, and if we have not, it is fit that we should resign the pre-eminence we have usurped.

It was not by an unbecoming affectation of pity for “the *melancholy infatuation of those pretenders to christianity, who reject her most sublime and important tenets,*” or by angry declamation against “*those prophane and malignant wretches who would undermine the foundation of present and eternal happiness, deny their God, and make a mockery of his word,*” that the venerable founders of the English church, or the later advocates of her discipline and doctrines evinced their zeal for her reputation and prosperity. To *refute* the cavils of the unbeliever, to detect his misrepresentations and unravel his sophistries, are the great objects of *their* emulative perseverance; and it is probably to their wisdom and moderation that our establishment is indebted for its security against the insidiousness of sceptical cunning, and the violence of fanatical delusion.

The great and decisive argument against that sect of Christians who would reduce every religious doctrine to the standard of reason is this: that if the truths revealed in the New Testament were within the comprehension of the human intellect, *there would be no merit in our faith.* To believe only such passages of scripture as are consistent with preconceived ideas, and intelligible to our unassisted capacities, is no evidence of our confidence in the wisdom of the Almighty, or our conviction of his goodness. Our assent to incontrovertible and self-evident truths is involuntary, and that the *doctrines* of pure christianity are all intelligible to the unassisted understanding is a position which Mr. Ravenhill would not in all probability have advanced, had he been aware that it is the fundamental axiom of Dr. Priestley.

That a minister will best fulfil his duty to the church who supports the doctrine of atonement, not because its nature and its justice are within the reach of human comprehension (since the Deity could have dispensed

with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and have accomplished the salvation of mankind by an act of grace, as easily as by an act of justice) *but because it is unequivocally declared in the scriptures, and we believe the scriptures to be true. On every question of this kind let us say, either receive the doctrine or deny the authority by which it is supported; either be thankful for the remission of your sins, through the atonement of Christ Jesus, or assert that St. Paul was a liar and a hypocrite.*

Of Mr. Ravenhill's talents as a preacher or a divine, we must confess that our opinion is unfavourable. We have quoted the only passage of his sermon that demanded particular notice. The rest of his discourse was a tissue of unconnected sentences, remarkable only for their garrulous insipidity. His manner is at once pert and unimpressive; his mouth is invariably distorted into a simper of self-complacency, and at the conclusion of every sentence he looked around with an air that seemed to say "*how much, my brethren, you must admire me:*" we listened to his discourse with impatience, and remember it without pleasure.

THEATRICAL REVIEW.

Nullus addictus jurare in verba magistri;
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas deferor hospes.

THE proprietors of Covent Garden seem resolved that we shall not be able to announce the appearance of any novelty during the present month. A comedy entitled the Gazette Extraordinary, of which the newspaper reporters express a favorable opinion, was represented in their bills to have been received with universal approbation, and we had therefore anticipated towards the close of the week, to enjoy a pleasure rather different in its nature and degree from that which is excited by the spectacle of Blue-beard. Mr. Holman's production, however, has been unexpectedly withdrawn, the new melo-drama at one theatre, and the opera at the other, are announced for exhibition on the eve of our publication, and we must therefore content ourselves with some general remarks on the present state of theatrical performers, and on the recent conduct of Messrs. Harris and his partners.

In the address to the public, immediately subsequent to the destruction of the old theatre, and in every advertisement that appeared during the continuance of the O. P. dispute, the managers were anxious to express their attachment to the legitimate drama, to declare their intention of rendering the most "heart-felt homage" to the genius of Shakespeare, and to announce their confident expectation of rendering both the theatre and the performances worthy of the first city of the world. In the address, written by Mr. Colman, the shade of our "immortal bard" was invoked with appropriate effect; and the spectator who should judge of the intention of what the proprietors of the theatre intended to represent within, from the impressions of the sculpture without, would expect to see the exhibition of classic tragedy, and chastened comedy. In the external decorations of the building there is nothing that would lead you to expect the continual repetition of pantomimes; the statues that present themselves to your view on your passage through the vestibule, are not those of Farley and Morton, but of Shakespeare and Eschylus; and even the drop scene represents a temple dedicated to the dramatic muse, adorned by busts of the greatest poets of ancient or modern ages, and built after the most ample model of Athenian architecture.

Suppose then, that a philosopher with these prepossessions of the pure rational delight that he is about to receive, quietly takes his seat,

and waits with anxious expectation for the rising of the curtain. The bell rings, the scene is about to burst upon his sight, and he expects to behold the field of Cressy, or the senate-house of Rome. The curtain rises ; instead of Julius Cæsar he beholds the majesty of Blue Beard ; or in the place of a British camp, and its centinels pacing the midnight watch, he discovers a perspective view of the Green Man at Deptford, and witnesses the pursuit of Harlequin, and the overturning of an apple-woman by the rotation of a magic gate. If he have the patience to sit any longer he is entertained by the sublime spectacle of a walking turnip, or the exquisite performances of an acting Hou-nhm ! These are the "classical representations" which are to "do honor to the country of Shakespeare," and elevate the drama to a "height of splendor never before witnessed by the English nation !"

The successive repetition of the Knight of Snowdown and Blue Beard is an act of positive injustice to the renters of the theatre. From their free admission, it is evidently that they derive no considerable advantage. When the same pieces are repeated forty times in the course of two months, what is there to seduce, or to reward a frequent attendance ? Harlequin and Asmodeus, the Knight of Snowdown, and Blue-Beard, are the only novelties produced, and were they not unworthy of Sophocles or Congreve they have been repeated beyond the possibility of endurance.

The exhibition of such spectacles may partly be occasioned by the want of an actress calculated to fill the higher departments of the drama. Mrs. Siddons is too *independent* to sacrifice much of her time or care to the gratification of the public, were not her age a sufficient apology for remissness, and a disqualification for the most interesting characters of our best pieces. She is too much *en bon point*, and too far advanced in life, to assume the parts of youthful mistresses, and sentimental heroines. In the walks of genteel comedy, Covent Garden is utterly unprovided. Miss Booth possesses every requisite of voice and action, but her face is too youthful, and her figure too diminutive. The loss of Miss Smith cannot be supplied, and its effects may teach future proprietors to beware how they sacrifice their professional and pecuniary interests to family jealousies, and the gratification of managerial caprice.

The manager of the Lyceum deserves great credit in his union of liberality with prudence in the representation of so many pieces ; which whether they be excellent, or otherwise, when estimated by the laws of the legitimate drama, cannot be seen by the critic without pleasure, or by the illiterate spectator without improvement. It is no mean recommendation of a piece that it appeals to the understanding rather than the eye. It is impossible to witness the representation even of *Hit or Miss*, without imbibing some idea, or becoming acquainted with some variety of human character that we had

not observed before ; but what edification is to be derived from witnessing the nocturnal docility of Astley's horses, or contemplating with uplifted eyes the spectacle of Blue Beard ? But even allowing the pieces exhibited at both theatres to have been of equal merit, the manager of the Lyceum can claim at least the merit of having afforded us variety ; and were his performers equal to his authors, we should leave the menagerie in Covent Garden to the custody of its keeper. But who can attend even the Lyceum with any degree of pleasure when Wrench supplies the place of Elliston, and the parts of Bannister are assumed by Melvin ? The former of these persons has as much pretension to appear in the character of a duke, as one of the giants at St. Dunstan's to dance a minuet at St. James's. When he wishes to be particularly graceful he rests his body on his right leg, in such a position that the lower part of his body reminds us of a pair of compasses, of which one leg is fixed upon the paper, while the other is about to make a circle. The less that is said of the latter personage the better. There is not at the Lyceum a single actor who can rise in a tragic character above the level of a lecturer on elocution. Raymond is the best of them, and we remember him in Aboumelique. Downton and Matthews are the support of the company. Miss Duncan is a clever actress, but we cannot persuade ourselves that she even looks like a lady of fashion ; there is a little too much of the animal about her : as for Mrs. Edwin we cannot help declaring that whatever pleasure we might otherwise receive from her performance, and whatever indulgence we might grant to her evident deficiency in the higher powers of the actress, are completely precluded by her gross and disgusting affectation. She too often looks like a snarling doll ; and never appeared to us in so advantageous a light as when she personated Aurora in Mr. Skeffington's farce of the *Mysterious Bride*. By the bye, the most mysterious circumstance respecting that performance was its existence longer than its birth-night.

On the whole, however, the performers at the Lyceum may be termed collectively a respectable company of comedians ; and we hope that their place will never be supplied by dancing colts and musical donkeys. Another Blue Beard could not be acted at this theatre without degrading the elephants into mice and the camels into grasshoppers : in which case the animals might afterwards be sold for the *living ornaments* of a baby-house.

We request the particular attention of our readers to the following questions and answers. They form the connecting links of a dispute, in which we have no immediate concern, but to which we may recur at a future opportunity. If Mr. Millar's assertion be correct, why does not he publish a list of the receipts and disbursements ? He is treasurer to a fund of a different nature, and having on the subject of that fund made replies nearly similar to those extracted, the

committee to whom he had referred have declared his *answer to be false*. In the present instance they may be true, but why not place his integrity beyond the possibility of dispute? A considerable time has elapsed since the termination of the O. P. contest, and an authorised statement of their accounts is *due* from the committee to the public.

ELECTORS OF THE WARD OF FARRINGDON WITHOUT.

A few plain Questions to Mr. Miller.

Were you not treasurer of the O. P. subscription, to defray legal expences arising from the opposition to the *Covent Garden Theatre* manager?

Have you ever returned the subscriptions, notwithstanding all actions have been so long withdrawn by the C. G. Manager?

Answer these, and I will then judge of your honesty! integrity! and patriotism!

Mr. Miller's Answer to the questions put to him in an anonymous bill.

The *false* and *calumnious* insinuations which are levelled at Mr. MILLER's character to serve a mere election purpose, would have been unanswered by him, did not his respect to the Ward call upon him to justify them for the support they give him.

Mr. Miller is Treasurer to the O. P. Subscription, but he has nothing to return to the subscribers.—All claims upon that fund, allowed by the Committee, have been paid; one claim only remains unallowed, and which cannot be paid until an additional subscription furnishes the means.

Skinner-street, Dec. 22, 1810.

TABLE V.
A List of Quack Medicines, Family Nostrums, &c.

Name	Composition.	For.	Real effects, or effects of imprudent administration.	Sale price, inclusive of stamp.	Per	Prime cost, exclusive of stamp and bottle.
				<i>L. S. D.</i>		<i>L. S. D.</i>
1. Moreland's Antiscorbutic Drops.	Solution of corrosive sublimate and infusion of Gentian.	Scurvy, &c.*	Madness, Cholic, Death.	0 10 6	<i>bottle.</i>	0 0 2
Durable Ink.	Solution of Lunar Caustic in water.	Marking Linen.	Burning but useful when cautiously used.	0 1 6	<i>bottle.</i>	0 0 2
Anderson's Pills.	Aloes.†	A Cathartic.	Efficacious.	0 1 1½	<i>box.</i>	0 0 1½
Tyce's Preventative powder.	Common Caustic.	For preventing Gonorrhœa, &c.	Dangerous and inefficacious.	0 2 6	<i>paper.</i>	0 0 0¼
Walker's Electuary.	Lenitive Electuary and Cinabar.	For the cure of Gonorrhœa.	Harmless and useful when properly employed.	0 2 9	<i>pot.</i>	0 0 2
Imperial Tincture.	Tincture of Pimento.	Nervous Disorders.	Inefficacious.	1 5 0	<i>4 oz. bottle.</i>	0 2 10

* See the trial of Ann Butterfield, for the murder of Mr. Scawen.

† In addition to the ingredients mentioned, there is usually a little Gum Arabic, &c. &c. and colouring materials.

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John A. Hart, del.

DINNER of the FOUR IN HAN



ND CLUB at SALT HILL. —

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